PROSE COMPOSITIONAL TECHNIQUES

in the

SUCCESSION NARRATIVE

(2 Sam. 7, 9-20; 1 Kings 1-2)

by

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A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Berkeley, California

The Graduate Theological Union

April, 1971

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PRÉCIS

There has long been considerable scholarly investigation of stylistic aspects of Old Testament poetry. But to date there has been relatively little comparable analysis of Old Testament prose. The thesis takes what is frequently regarded as the most superb example of extended Old Testament narrative, the Succession Narrative (2 Sam. 7, 9-20; 1 Kings 1-2) and subjects it to a rhetorical analysis. The presupposition of the thesis is that a careful scrutiny of modes of prose composition and a precise description of those modes will enable us to do a more thorough exegesis of the corpus than would be possible without this analysis.

Chapter I states what we understand the methodology of rhetorical criticism to be, and then outlines to what extent this approach has been applied to the Succession Narrative.

Among compositional elements which we might study, the most important for Biblical literature is that of repetition. Analysis of this literary phenomenon occupies the next two chapters of the thesis. The most important instances of repetition are those which define the structure of a pericope or series of pericopes. In Chapter II we describe instances of inclusio, chiasmus, anaphora and epiphora in the Succession Narrative.

Chapter III deals with instances of repetition which

do not function to determine structure. Here we are concerned primarily with the appearance of certain "key words", and how they provide a focus or a thread of continuity for the stories in which they are used. Then we point to other rhetorically important repetitions, functioning to retard the action of a story, give emphasis to a point, or indicate arrival at the climax of the action.

Irony, a rhetorical technique employed with great effectiveness throughout the Succession Narrative, is the subject of Chapter IV. Here our author's craft is considered from a broader basis than in the previous two chapters.

Chapter V concerns itself with the rhetorical aspects of the theology of the Succession Narrative. We take up the vexed question of 2 Sam. 7, and argue for its intimate connection with the remainder of the corpus. 2 Sam. 7 is shown to be consistent within itself, and a masterpiece of rhetoric. More importantly for our thesis, we argue that our author has taken key words, motifs, and the theology of 2 Sam. 7 and used them as the foundation for the writing of the story of the succession to David's throne.

Above all, we demonstrate throughout this final chapter that the Succession Narrative cannot be regarded as a primarily secular document. Although its theology is subtle, the corpus is revealed to be theological throughout. The Succession Narrative witnesses in a very sophisticated manner to the God who directs the vicissitudes of history to his own ends.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For the many helpful comments and criticisms offered by my dissertation committee, I wish now to express my gratitude. My chairman, Dr. James Muilenburg, along with Dr. Jonas Greenfield, Dr. Francis Andersen, and Dr. David Noel Freedman, have read portions or all of this paper in a preliminary form and, by their contributions, greatly strengthened its final form. Any weaknesses, however, are my responsibility alone.

I would also like to thank my family, and especially my wife, for encouraging me to pursue my interest and enduring the long hours of study necessary for the completing of this work.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AJSL	The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures
ANET	James B. Pritchard, ed. Ancient Near Eastern Texts
Bib.	Biblica
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZ	Biblische Zeitschrift
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CJT	Canadian Journal of Theology
ETL	Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses
GK	Gesenius' Hebrew Grammer, ed. E. Kautzsch, trans. A. E. Cowley
HSCP	Harvard Studies in Classical Philology
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
IB	The Interpreter's Bible
IDB	Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible
Inter.	Interpretation
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JQR	Jewish Quarterly Review
JThC	Journal for Theology and the Church
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies

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LXX	Septuaginta
MT	Masoretic text
OS	Oudtestamentische Studiën
OTWSA	Die Ou Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap in Suid Africa
RB	Revue Biblique
PHPhR	Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses
SEA	Svensk Exegetisk Arsbok
SJT	Scottish Journal of Theology
SVT	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
TAPA	American Philological Association. Transactions and Proceedings
TLZ	Theologische Literaturzeitung
TS	Theological Studies
TZ	Theologische Zeitschrift
VT	Vetus Testamentum
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZTK	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A proper beginning for a work of this nature should contain a statement of methodology. The approach I will use in studying the Succession Narrative is that of "rhetorical criticism", a type of literary analysis with broad roots in past Biblical and other literary scholarship, but more specifically to be identified with and expounded by James Muilenburg.[1] The basic presupposition of rhetorical criticism is that by determining the techniques employed in composing a particular story, we are better able to understand the story itself:

> For the more deeply one penetrates the formulations as they have been transmitted to us, the more sensitive he is to the roles which words and motifs play in a composition; the more he concentrates on the ways in which thought has been woven into linguistic patterns, the better able he is to think the thoughts of the biblical writer after him....a responsible and proper

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[1] A full exposition of the methodology is given in his "Form Criticism and Beyond," JBL, LXXVIII (1969), pp. 1-18, and may be illustrated by his scholarly writings throughout his career. See especially "The Literary Character of Isaiah 34," JBL, LIX (1940), pp. 339-65; "Psalm 47," JBL, LXIII (1944), pp. 235-56; "A Study in Hebrew Rhetoric: Repetition and Style," SVT, I (1953), pp. 97-111; "Introduction and Exegesis to Isaiah, Chapters 40-66," IB, V, pp. 381-773; "The Form and Structure of the Covenantal Formulations," VT, IX (1959), pp. 347-65; "The Linguistic and Rhetorical Usages of the Particle כי in the Old Testament," HUCA, XXXII (1961), pp. 135-60; "A Liturgy on the Triumphs of Yahweh," in Studia Biblica et Semitica (Wageningen, 1966), pp. 233-51; "The Intercession of the Covenant Mediator (Exodus 33:1a, 12-17)," in Words and Meanings, ed. P. R. Ackroyd and B. Lindars (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 159-81.

> articulation of the words in their linguistic patterns and in their precise formulations will reveal to us the texture and fabric of the writer's thought, not only what it is that he thinks, but as he thinks it.[1]

The rhetorical critic approaches a particular text with the assumption that it has patterns which may be discerned, and that following careful scrutiny of the passage he will be able to make meaningful statements as to the nature of its composition. He understands that the pericope has been fashioned in a meaningful sequence of words, points of tension and relaxation, and other compositional techniques, and that identification of those techniques will allow him to penetrate to the deepest meanings contained in the passage.

The identification of these techniques proceeds as questions are addressed to the text. What words, sentences, paragraphs and themes are repeated, and how do these repetitions inform us as to the structure of the story? What breaks and what emphases do they indicate? How do they signal moments of importance in the mind of the author? Where do certain particles occur, and how do their collocations inform us as to the form of the passage? Can we identify instances of assonance, alliteration and irony, and what do they signify for our interpretation of the text? On the basis of these and other critical observations, the rhetorical critic arrives at an understanding of the proportions of the work he is considering, its subdivisions

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[1]"Form Criticism and Beyond," p. 7.

and limits, its stresses, indeed its very intention.

Like stylistic or aesthetic criticism, rhetorical criticism begins with an examination of basic figures of speech. But there is a distinction to be made between the style of a passage in its strict sense and the rhetoric of a passage. A critic of style will determine literary features of a given unit, as for example alliteration, assonance, metaphor and simile, or even structural patterns such as chiasmus or inclusio. But the task of the style critic, narrowly understood, does not involve reference to the function of these figures of speech for the meaning of the passage, while a critic of rhetoric has the specific goal of determining the purposeful use of speech figures to convey meaning:

> Darum gilt es hier auch nicht mehr bei Stilbeobachtungen zu rubrizieren und zu katalogisieren, und es dabei bleiben zu lassen, sondern es gilt, die einzelnen Stilbeobachtungen auf ihren Funktionswert hin zu prüfen, sie in die Sinndeutung des Ganzen einzugliedern.[1]

Thus, chiasmus or inclusio are of importance for rhetoric as possible indications of units of thought, assonance is examined to see whether or not it is intended to lay stress on particular words or to indicate a climactic point in the story, and repetitions are studied for clues as to the structure and meaning of the whole.

Prominent in Muilenburg's statement of the goals

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[1]Meir Weiss, "Einiges über die Bauformen des Erzählens in der Bibel," VT, XIII (1963), p. 460.

of rhetorical criticism given above[1] is the concern to determine the author's point of view presented in his creative work. The assumption here is that the writer was himself conscious of certain techniques and that he employed these with deliberation in order to build his own interpretation of the events he was describing into the story. Bourke's comment in closing his excellent study of narrative techniques in 1 Sam. 1-3 expresses well our contention:

> This infancy narrative, we may conclude, is a remarkable example of how a Hebrew writer can use literary form to convey meaning. The structure of the story has a significance of its own. The real persons and the real events have been "interpreted"; they have been assembled in such a way that the author's judgement upon them emerges from the action of the story itself as it unfolds...[2]

Aristotle defined rhetoric as "the art of persuasion";[3] Bourke appreciates the care with which the Hebrew writer has crafted his story so as to <u>persuade</u>. This is not to say that we must concern ourselves with the author's own statements of intention for his creative work, even if that were possible in the case of Biblical literature. We have no quarrel with modern literary criticism, which regards the author's biography and his personal interpretation of his work as of less importance than analysis of the work

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[1]See p. 1.

[2]Joseph Bourke, "Samuel and the Ark: A Study in Contrasts," <u>Dominican Studies</u>, VII (1954), p. 87.

[3]<u>Rhetorica</u> 2:1.

of art itself.[1] What we are saying is that our author worked deliberately with conscious compositional techniques, and that by uncovering those techniques within a particular passage, the meaning of the passage is disclosed to us.[2]

While the method of rhetorical criticism is only recently being exploited in a systematic way, the approach itself has roots far back in the history of biblical interpretation. Both Jerome and Augustine were skilled in classical rhetoric and commented on the style of the Scriptures.[3] The approach of the rabbinic commentators in the Midrashim has the spirit if perhaps not at times the conscious attempt at objectivity of the rhetorical critic. Like the rhetorical critic, the rabbi attempted to penetrate to the inner meaning of a passage, and utilized

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[1]Gabriël Cohn, Das Buch Jona im Lichte der biblischen Erzählkunst (Assen, 1969), p. 34 comments on this: "Die geschilderte Interpretationsweise schafft auch...eine Trennung zwischen dem Dichter und seiner Dichtung, indem sie dem Sinn, den der Dichter selbst seinem Werk gibt, keine eigentliche Bedeutung beimisst. Die Quellen seiner schöpferischen Kraft sind weitgehend auch dem Dichter selbst verborgen. Seine 'Absichten' können deshalb nicht das legitime Thema der Deutungsforschung sein, sondern nur die Dichtung selbst. Die Meinung, dass die Dichter die berufensten Interpreten ihrer Werke sind, wird zurückgewiesen." See also Weiss, "Weiteres über die Bauformen des Erzählens in der Bibel," Bib., XLVI (1965), p. 206.

[2]With this Cohn, op. cit., p. 36 is in agreement: "Die dargestellte Forschungsmethode wählt das Wort des Dichters selbst zum Hauptthema ihrer Untersuchung."

[3]See Nils Lund, Chiasmus in the New Testament (Chapel Hill, 1942), pp. 3-5 and A. A. Gilmore, "Augustine and the Critical Method," HTR, XXXIX (1946), pp. 141-64.

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interpretative and synthetic judgement in so doing.[1] More recently, one thinks of Lowth[2] and Herder,[3] both of whom practiced the art of rhetorical criticism in that they combined technical analysis of the nature of Hebrew poetry with an appreciation of the meaning of the words.[4] At the opening of our century, König published his Stilistik, Rhetorik, Poetik,[5] primarily a splendid catalogue of stylistic features, but which also included certain functional or rhetorical comments as we have employed the term. Closely allied with our own approach is the work of Buber and Rosenzweig, who published several articles programmatic for a rhetorical analysis of the Old Testament in connection with their translation of the Hebrew Bible into German.[6]

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[1]For evidence of the influence of classical rhetoric on Rabbinic exegesis, see David Daube, "Rabbinic Methods of Interpretation and Hellenistic Rhetoric," HUCA, XXII (1949), pp. 239-64.

[2]Available to me as Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews, trans. G. Gregory (2nd ed.; Boston, 1815).

[3]Available to me as The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry, trans. James Marsh (Burlington, 1833).

[4]In the judgement of Samuel Terrien, "History of the Interpretation of the Bible III, Modern Period," IB, I, p. 132 "...Herder may still teach a great deal to biblical interpreters who have not begun to understand the deep interweaving which unites theological formulation and poetic diction."

[5]Stilistik, Rhetorik, Poetik in Bezug auf die biblische Literatur (Leipzig, 1900).

[6]Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig, Die Schrift und ihre Verdeutschung (Berlin, 1936).

They were particularly aware of the importance of bringing out significant key words in one's interpretation of a passage.[1] Cassuto exploits the method of key word analysis fully and systematically in his Biblical commentaries.[2] He also places great importance on numbers and the number of repetitions, contending that three and seven in particular were quantities deliberately built into the narratives. Finally we must mention Alonso-Schökel's very thorough Estudios de Poética Hebrea.[3] Again we would contend that the work is stylistic rather than rhetorical in our understanding of the words. Other publications of his do go beyond stylistic phenomena to interpretative judgement.[4] Alonso-Schökel's Estudios is also helpful in that it links stylistic criticism of the Bible with the current emphasis of literary criticism in general.[5]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 211-38 and 262-75.

[2] Cf. A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, Parts 1 and 2, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem, 1961) and A Commentary on the Book of Exodus, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem, 1967).

[3] Ed. Juan Flors (Barcelona, 1963).

[4] See especially his "Erzählkunst im Buche der Richter," Bib., XLII (1961), pp. 143-72.

[5] Estudios, pp. 55-66. He makes a full theoretical statement in The Inspired Word: Scripture in the Light of Language and Literature, trans. Francis Martin (New York, 1965). See also D. F. Rauber, "Literary Values in the Bible: The Book of Ruth," JBL, LXXXIX (1970), pp. 27-37. In the field of literary criticism, see especially Erich Auerbach's Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, 1953), a brilliant exposition of the way in which literary style conveys a

If these individuals are background to the current interest in the rhetoric of the Bible, credit must also be given to the impetus provided by studies in oral folk literature. In Scandanavia interest developed in the comparative study of patterns of composition in the vast folklore of the region.[1] Olrik[2] formulated certain general rules which he contended governed all primitive oral utterance. Included in his categories were the laws of opening and close, of repetition, of the number three, of contrast, of concentration upon a chief character, and of strict unity. Epic principles such as these have been applied with gratifying results to classical and other literature[3]

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writer's view of reality to the reader. His first chapter compares a scene from The Odyssey with Genesis 22. Other useful references include Cleanth Brooks, The Well Wrought Urn (New York, 1947); William Empson, Seven Types of Ambiguity (New York, 1955); Stanley Hyman, The Armed Vision: A Study in the Methods of Modern Literary Criticism (New York, 1949); Roman Ingarden, Das literarische Kunstwerk (Tübingen, 1965); Wolfgang Kayser, Das sprachliche Kunstwerk (9th ed.; Bern, 1963); I. A. Richards, Principles of Literary Criticism (New York, 1952); Emil Staiger, Die Kunst der Interpretation (Zürich, 1955); M. Wehrli, Allgemeine Literaturwissenschaft (Bern, 1951); René Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature (New York, 1949) and see the bibliographies in those works. The methods of modern literary criticism are specifically linked with the task of Old Testament exegesis by Weiss, Hammiqra' Kidmuto (The Bible and Modern Literary Theory; Jerusalem, 1967); Cohn, op. cit., pp. 32-44; Alonso-Schökel, The Inspired Word; and others.

[1]Cf. Lund, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

[2]Alex Olrik, "Epische Gesetze der Volksdichtung," Zeitschrift für Deutsches Altertum, LI (1909-10), pp. 1-12.

[3]Cf. Knut Liestøl, The Origin of the Icelandic Family Sagas (Oslo, 1930); J. A. Notopoulos, "Parataxis in Homer: A New Approach to Homeric Literary Criticism," TAPA, LXXX (1949),

and to the Bible.[1]

The stress on the spoken quality of folk literature and the recognition of formal laws of composition brought out by the scholarly investigations has had great impact on Biblical studies, particularly as developed by Hermann Gunkel. While Gunkel was primarily concerned with form critical questions, he had a remarkable understanding of Hebrew rhetoric. He was aware of the epic laws of composition set forth by Olrik, and applied those rules extensively in his commentary on Genesis,[2] his study of Old Testament fables,[3] and in other writings. Gunkel had a keen sense of the literary quality of Hebrew literature, and was able to describe its genius with well chosen words. He provided thereby a much needed corrective to the excessively abstract concerns into which the school of Wellhausen had fallen, and

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pp. 1-23; idem, "Continuity and Interconnexion in Homeric Oral Composition," TAPA, LXXXII (1951), pp. 81-101; A. B. Lord, "Studies in Epic Techniques of Oral Verse-making: I. Homer and the Homeric Style; II. The Homeric Language as the Language of an Oral Poetry," HSCP, XLI (1930), pp. 73-147 and XLIII (1932), pp. 1-50; idem, "Composition by Theme in Homer and Southslavic Epos," TAPA, LXXXII (1951), pp. 71-80; idem, The Singer of Tales (Cambridge, 1964); F. P. Magoun, "Oral-formulaic Character of Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry," Speculum, XXVIII (1953), pp. 446-67; R. A. Waldron, "Oral-formulaic Technique and Middle English Alliterative Poetry," Speculum, XXXII (1957), pp. 792-804; C. M. Bowra, Heroic Poetry (London, 1952); W. C. Greene, "The Spoken and the Written Word," HSCP, LX (1951), pp. 23-57.

[1]Cf. especially R. C. Culley, Oral Formulaic Language in the Biblical Psalms (Toronto, 1967) and Charles Lohr, "Oral Techniques in the Gospel of Matthew," CBQ, XXIII (1961), pp. 403-35.

[2]Genesis (7th ed.; Göttingen, 1966).

[3]Das Märchen im Alten Testament (Tübingen, 1917).

led the way toward the rhetorical criticism of the Bible. Gunkel recognized the importance of comprehending the techniques employed by a narrator in conveying his message, and considered those techniques extensively in the Einleitung to his commentary on Genesis within a section entitled "Kunstform der Sagen der Genesis".[1]

But not all form critical work has been of the multifaceted or high quality of Gunkel's achievements. Form criticism by its very nature placed little emphasis on the creativity of the individual for it asserted rather that the poet or narrator of a piece of literature was limited in his possibilities of expression by the formal characteristics of the genre into which he was casting his words. While form criticism does recognize the alterations which take place in a particular genre over a period of time,[2] even in so doing the prior assumption and the emphasis is on the persistency and the stability of form. At this point the goals of form criticism and rhetorical criticism go separate ways. The one works back from the existing text to identification of an original nucleus; it is interested in the present form in so far as it reveals the original kernal of tradition. The other gives

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[1]Pp. xxvii-lvi. This has been translated by W. H. Carruth as The Legends of Genesis (New York, 1966).

[2]Cf. Hermann Gunkel and Joachim Begrich, Einleitung in die Psalmen (Göttingen, 1931) and Klaus Koch, The Growth of the Biblical Tradition, trans. S. M. Cupitt (New York, 1969).

due attention to this history of development, but focuses upon the text in its final form. Whereas the form critic presupposes certain basic patterns into which particular expressions may be categorized, the rhetorical critic presupposes the unique quality of each particular passage.[1] While the first proceeds from the commonalities of a given genre, the second is sensitive to those points at which the genre is broken and individuality of expression is most evident. Ideally the two methodologies should be utilized together, as the form and the content of a piece are inseparable. Rhetorical considerations naturally follow those of form criticism, and the exegete will do well to begin with careful scrutiny of the application of the prior discipline for his passage. But then in rhetorical analysis proper he goes beyond[2] consideration of genre and Sitz im Leben to ponder the particular modes of composition.[3] Even here the two disciplines overlap, for where the form critic looks for typical patterns of composition, the rhetorical

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[1]Cf. Weiss, "Einiges über die Bauformen," p. 459.

[2]To use the apt expression of Muilenburg, "form criticism and beyond".

[3]Again the work of Muilenburg, especially his commentary on II and III Isaiah, illustrates the skillful combination of both methodologies. Having recognized the presence of oracles of salvation, hymns, laments, funeral dirges, messenger formulae, and other forms, he then goes on to identify those places in which form is not a binding force on the poet, and how he will alter form or even reverse the normal implications of form in order to express his own concern and make his particular point.

critic analyzes form within a single passage:

> It is our contention that the narrators and poets of ancient Israel and her Near Eastern neighbors were dominated not only by the formal and traditional modes of speech of the literary genres or types, but also by the techniques of narrative and poetic composition.[1]

In concerning itself not with the process by which the text has come to have its present form, but rather with the text itself, it is logical that the critic of rhetoric should emphasize where possible the creative influence of the final compiler. The current stress in Biblical scholarship on redaction criticism is in harmony with this interest.[2]

Of course, in his attempt to illuminate the spirit of a passage, the rhetorical critic's own judgement is very important and the charge of subjectivity can be leveled at him. But the danger, if indeed it is a danger, must be accepted if this kind of analysis is to be attempted. Kessler, referring to Staiger, suggests that subjectivity is a proper and necessary tool of Biblical exegesis:

> "A rich and receptive heart" together with the necessary "scholarly equipment" constitute the two essential requirements for literary criticism, so that "the chasm between the Liebhaber and the accomplished scholar" may disappear.[3]

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[1]Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," p. 10.

[2]Cf. Peter Ellis, The Yahwist: The Bible's First Theologian (Notre Dame, 1968), p. 4 where he cites as particularly fine examples the works of von Rad (Old Testament Theology, The Problem of the Hexateuch and Genesis) and R. Brown (The Gospel According to John).

[3]Martin Kessler, "Narrative Technique in 1 Sm 16:

Beyond our general criticism of the overly exclusive application of the form critical methodology, there is the further question of the assumption of form critics that all of Old Testament literature can be classified into one or another literary genre. The issue is clearest with regard to the narrative portions of the Bible. While form critical analysis of the Psalms, for example, has yielded much, similar study of narrative has been troubled by vague terms of classification[1] and forces the literature into categories foreign to itself:

> Bezeichenderweise kennen ja die alttestamentlichen Erzähler selber keinerlei "Typen" oder "Gattungen"; ihre Erzählungen sind einfach dabar: "Wort" oder "Sache", d. h. eine Realität.[2]

The impasse reached in form critical studies of prose is generally recognized at this time.[3] In the probable absence of significant form critical advances in our under-

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1-13," CBQ, XXXII (1970), p. 544. Similar statements are made by Harold Fisch, "The Analogy of Nature: A Note on the Structure of Old Testament Imagery," JTS, N. S. VI (1955), pp. 161-62 and by Hyman, op. cit., p. 8. Cohn, op. cit., p. 38 regards subjective judgements as "unentbehrlich".

[1]See particularly Aage's Bentzen's comments in his Introduction to the Old Testament I (Copenhagen, 1948), pp. 232ff.

[2]Carl Keller, "Die Gefährdung der Ahnfrau," ZAW, LXVI (1954), p. 183.

[3]So for example Weiss, "Weiteres über die Bauformen," p. 205; I. L. Seeligmann, "Hebräische Erzählung und biblische Geschichtsschreibung," TZ, XVIII (1962), pp. 306ff.; and Keller, op. cit., pp. 181-82. For an unsatisfactory attempt to categorize narratives form critically, see Claus Westermann, "Arten der Erzählung in der Genesis," Forschung am Alten Testament (Munich, 1964), pp. 9-91.

standing of Hebrew prose, a rhetorical analysis is even more appealing and relevant. Moreover, while some studies along rhetorical lines have dealt with prose, the methodology has been preoccupied generally with poetic sections of the Old Testament, and rightly so, for it is with the high style of a language that the most fruitful work can be done. Recently however, the abiding interest in the ways in which ancient Israel's poetry was crafted has begun to be matched by an equal concern for her prose.[1]

Among the possible prose compositions of the Old Testament which we might submit for rhetorical analysis, the work which most attracts our attention is the Succession Narrative (2 Sam. 7, 9-20; 1 Kings 1-2). Here is a corpus of considerable length, unity of theme and single authorship.[2] Even more important is its stylistic excel-

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[1]Good examples of the application of the methodology to prose include Muilenburg, "The Intercession of the Covenant Mediator"; Bourke, op. cit.; Blenkinsopp, "Structure and Style in Judges 13-16," JBL, LXXXII (1963), pp. 65-76; idem, "Jonathan's Sacrilege, 1 Sm 14, 1-46: A Study in Literary History," CBQ, XXVI (1964), pp. 423-49; idem, "Theme and motif in the succession history (2 Sam. xi 2ff) and the Yahwist corpus," SVT, XV (1966), pp. 44-57; Alonso-Schökel, "Erzählkunst im Buche der Richter"; and Cohn, op. cit. Specific narrative techniques have been examined, such as interior monologue by Weiss, "Einiges über die Bauformen" and flashback by Norbert Lohfink, "Darstellungskunst und Theologie in Dtn. 1,6-3,29," Bib., XLI (1961), pp. 105-34. Cf. also Wilhelm Caspari, "Der Stil des Eingangs der israelitischen Novelle," Zeitschrift für Wissenschaftliche Theologie, LIII (1910-1911), pp. 218-53.

[2]Established by Leonhard Rost, Die Ueberlieferung von der Thronnachfolge Davids (Stuttgart, 1926). This is available to the writer in idem, Das kleine Credo und andere Studien zum Alten Testament (Heidelberg, 1965), pp. 119-253. There are a few verses of these chapters which should be

lence; it is generally regarded as the finest example of Hebrew prose:

> The style of the early source of Samuel (notably in II Samuel 9-20) is unsurpassed in the whole range of Hebrew prose literature. The author's expert use of syntax and appropriate idiomatic expressions, his classic Hebrew, ranging from the noblest to the coarsest expression, his vivid descriptions and characterizations, and his lively dialogues have seldom if ever been surpassed in the literature of mankind.[1]

A first glance at the Succession Narrative reveals that its author has been highly creative in linking together chapter after chapter with recurring motifs, sub-plots, and other rhetorical devices. Persons from one story reappear later. Character is strikingly portrayed, but only indirectly by means of the remarkable dialogues to which our attention is attracted. This corpus provides a unique opportunity to examine Hebrew prose composition on the basis of a systematic analysis of an extended work which is uncomplicated by consideration of sources or layers of tradition.[2]

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regarded as part of a later redaction. Most important among these are 2 Sam. 7:12b-13a, 2 Sam. 18:18, and 1 Kings 2:1-4, 11, 26-27 and 35. We will discuss the secondary nature of these verses in the course of our thesis.

[1]Robert Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament (New York, 1948), p. 359. For other comments on the superlative style of the Succession Narrative, see R. N. Whybray, The Succession Narrative (Naperville, Ill.; 1968), p. 10 and James Montgomery, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Kings (New York, 1951), pp. 68-70.

[2]The J source, or within that the Joseph story, or the account of David's rise to power (1 Sam. 16:1ff.) are all more difficult for our purposes in that they give evidence of being compilations of two or more source strata.

Building from this study, other narrative portions of the Old Testament can be examined in a similar manner with the object of arriving at general rules of Hebrew prose compositional techniques.[1]

At this point credit should be given to previous scholarship which closely approximates our own approach to the Succession Narrative. Luther[2] discussed the character of certain of the chapters of the Succession Narrative as examples of Novellen, and spoke briefly of such techniques as the retarding of action, the Grundmotiv, the purpose of the story, the importance of dramatic tension, and the care given to psychological details. Caspari published two articles[3] dealing in part with our corpus and incorporated stylistic observations in his commentary on the books of Samuel.[4] Gressmann followed the tradition established by

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[1]Helpful studies on narrative in the general field of literary criticism include Phyllis Bentley, Some Observations on the Art of Narrative (New York, 1948); E. K. Brown, Rhythm in the Novel (Toronto, 1963); E. M. Forster, Aspects of the Novel (New York, 1927); L. Lämmert, Bauformen des Erzählens (Stuttgart, 1955); Percy Lubbock, The Craft of Fiction (rev. ed.; New York, 1947) and Edwin Muir, The Structure of the Novel (London, 1949).

[2]Bernhard Luther, "Die Novelle von Juda und Tamar und andere israelitische Novellen," in Eduard Meyer, Die Israeliten und ihre Nachbarstämme (Halle, 1906), pp. 175-206.

[3]Caspari, "Literarische Art und historischer Wert von 2 Sam. 15-20," Theologische Studien und Kritiken, LXXXII (1909), pp. 317-48 and "Der Stil des Eingangs der israelitischen Novelle."

[4]Die Samuelbücher (Leipzig, 1926).

his teacher Gunkel and wrote a commentary on First and Second Samuel[1] in which he indicated the "scenes" making up a given story and commented on the style of the prose, although not in any systematic or analytical way. Schulz made what we would term rhetorical comments in his Samuel commentary;[2] he especially noted the use of key words. Schulz later published a lengthy article[3] which was intended to deal more thoroughly with the prose literary techniques he had been able to mention only fleetingly in his commentary. In this he applied Olrik's epic laws and other compositional categories to advantage. Rost[4] made some important stylistic and even rhetorical suggestions in connection with his demonstration that 2 Sam. 9-20 and 1 Kings 1-2 is a unified composition. Among the features he noted are key words and inclusios, the use of scenes to propel action, the centrality of speeches and the love of messenger speeches, the narrator's occasional side comments and the vivid portrayal of character. While Rost's enumeration of these characteristics is excellent, it is incomplete and is presented only as an adjunct to his source critical study. Adar makes very interesting observations on composition in

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[1]Hugo Gressmann, Die älteste Geschichtsschreibung und Prophetie Israels (Göttingen, 1910).

[2]Alfons Schulz, Die Bücher Samuel (Münster, 1920).

[3]"Erzählungskunst in den Samuel-Büchern, in Biblische Zeitfragen, Vol. 11, Heft 6/7 (1923).

[4]Thronnachfolge.

his book on Hebrew narratives.[1] Carlson[2] attempted to demonstrate that the Deuteronomic school took an earlier epic of David and greatly reworked it so as to present its own ideological viewpoint throughout the second book of Samuel. Carlson's work is that of redaction criticism, and he gives considerable attention to compositional techniques in the course of his argument. The work is marred by extravagant and poorly supported claims of direct Deuteronomic editing in 2 Sam. Whybray[3] wrote an excellent section describing the literary character of the Succession Narrative in his monograph relating that corpus with wisdom literature. Hals[4] discussed techniques by which the narrator conveys his theological viewpoint in the book of Ruth, and then brings in the Succession Narrative for comparison. Finally there is the work of Klaehn,[5] Blenkinsopp,[6]

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[1]Zvi Adar, The Biblical Narrative, trans. Misha Louvish (Jerusalem, 1959). Pp. 142-97 and 249-57 deal with portions of our corpus.

[2]R. A. Carlson, David, the Chosen King, trans. Eric J. Sharpe and Stanley Rudman (Stockholm, 1964).

[3]Op. cit., pp. 10-55.

[4]Ronald Hals, The Theology of the Book of Ruth (Philadelphia, 1969).

[5]Theodor Klaehn, Die sprachliche Verwandschaft der Quelle K der Samuelisbücher mit der Quelle J des Heptateuch (Borna-Leipzig, 1914).

[6]Blenkinsopp, "Theme and motif in the succession history (2 Sam. xi 2ff) and the Yahwist corpus".

Brueggemann,[1] Ellis[2] and others comparing the J source with our corpus on stylistic and rhetorical grounds.

We intend to study the construction of the Succession Narrative in detail, with the view of formulating certain principles of its composition. Throughout we will attempt to show how an understanding of compositional techniques aids our exegesis. There are numerous prose techniques which we might analyze;[3] some are obviously more important than others. The most significent technique for Biblical literature[4] and probably also for all literature is that of repetition. Study of this phenomenon will occupy the next two chapters of our thesis. Even among instances of repetition we have had to limit ourselves to the more important; we cannot deal significantly with the more than twenty categories of repetition which have been classified

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[1]Walter Brueggemann, "David and His Theologian," CBQ, XXX (1968), pp. 156-81.

[2]Ellis, op. cit. For some intriguing parallels between the figure of Cain and David, see B. Davie Napier, From Faith to Faith: Essays on Old Testament Literature (New York, 1955), p. 133.

[3]Alonso-Schökel, Estudios, p. 337, n. 1 lists allusion, antithesis, repetition, enumerations, transitions, types of discourse, types of narrative, hyperbole, choice of vocabulary, symbols, similes, images, comparisons, allegory and metaphor, adjectives, elements of color, characterization, humor, etc.

[4]So also Martin Buber, The Prophetic Faith, trans. Carlyle Witton-Davies (New York, 1949), p. 9; Martin Buss, The Prophetic Word of Hosea: A Morphological Study (BZAW 111; Berlin, 1969), p. 38; and cf. Muilenburg, "A Study in Hebrew Rhetoric," p. 100.

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by Gonda.[1] Among instances of repetition, the most important for our purposes are those which define the structure of a unit or series of units. In Chapter II we will consider the structural patterns which appear in the Succession Narrative, that is, inclusio, chiasmus, anaphora, epiphora and anadiplosis. In Chapter III we will discuss how non-structured words and phrases contribute to our interpretation of the passage. First we will discuss key words and indicate how they provide a focus or thread of continuity for the stories in which they appear. Then we will point to other rhetorically important repetitions which function to retard the action of a story, give emphasis to a point, or indicate arrival at the climax of the action. Irony, a rhetorical technique used with great effectiveness throughout the Old Testament, will be the subject of Chapter IV. In our fifth and final chapter we will consider the theology of the Succession Narrative from a rhetorical point of view. Here we will demonstrate how specific narrative techniques illuminate the author's theology, and we will suggest the purpose for which the Succession Narrative was written.

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[1]J. Gonda, Stylistic Repetition in the Veda (Amsterdam, 1959) deals with the following categories: balanced structures and symmetrical word groups, positive and negative expressions of the same thought, chiasmus, anaphora, responsio, alliteration, rhyme and homeoteleuton, assonance, paronomasia, figura etymologica, polyptoton, explicative conduplication, concatenation, catena, duplication of words, word groups and sentences, epiphora, etymologies, enumerations and proper names.

The thesis works then from a narrower to a broader application of the methodology of rhetorical criticism. We begin by categorizing repetitions, move on to consider structural repetitions and then repetitions of key words. The topic of irony is of wider scope and necessarily more subjective. Finally we come to the most important task of any exegetical work, the task of theology.

CHAPTER II

REPETITION AND STRUCTURE

1. The Phenomenon of Repetition in the Succession Narrative

Before we proceed to a detailed consideration of the structural and exegetical importance of repetition, it will be helpful first to outline briefly the general characteristics of iterative narrative style in the Succession Narrative.[1] A preliminary phenomenological analysis of instances of repetition will give us a grounding from which we may proceed to more sophisticated inferences regarding the data. We present below certain general principles of repetition in the Succession Narrative, along

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[1]The importance of Hebrew repetitive patterns is noted throughout the scholarly literature. Representative of study on the subject are the following: Buber and Rosenzweig, op. cit., pp. 211-38 and 262-75; Muilenburg, "A Study in Hebrew Rhetoric"; L. J. Liebreich, "Psalms 34 and 145 in the Light of their Key Words," HUCA, XXVII (1956), pp. 181-92; Gillis Gerleman, "The Song of Deborah in the Light of Stylistics," VT, I (1951), pp. 168-80; Jean Magne, "Répétitions de mots et exégèse dans quelque psaumes et le Pater," Bib., XXXIX (1958), pp. 177-97; N. H. Ridderbos, "The Psalms: Style-figures and Structure," OS, XIII (1963), pp. 43-76; Nahum M. Sarna, "Psalm 89: A Study in Inner Biblical Exegesis," in Biblical and Other Studies, ed. Alexander Altmann (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 29-46; Alonso-Schökel, Estudios, pp. 309-35 and 363-81; R. A. Carlson, "Élisée - le successeur d'Élie," VT, XX (1970), pp. 385-405. The importance of repetitions for structure is emphasized by Lohr, op. cit. and by R. Tournay and R. Schwab, Les Psaumes (Paris, 1955), pp. 62-76. For an attempt to date Hebrew poetry on the basis of changes in stylistic features and repetitive patterns, see W. F. Albright, Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan (Garden City, New York; 1968), pp. 1-52.

with a representative but not exhaustive listing of illustrative examples.

1) Repetitions divide into three groups according to their length: a) a key word, b) a repeated phrase, and c) a longer repeated unit, the equivalent of our sentence or paragraph. The first group is exemplified by the root רוץ in 2 Sam. 18:19-27 or the root שכב in 2 Sam. 11:2-13. The second group is illustrated by the phrase ולא ירד אל־ביתו and its variations in 2 Sam. 11:8-13 or by the phrase למה תהיו אחרנים להשיב את־המלך and its variations in 2 Sam. 19:11-44 (specifically verses 11, 12, 13 and 44). The third group includes Jonadab's plan in 2 Sam. 13:5 (and the report of its execution in verse 6):

(2 Sam. 13:5) שכב על־משכבך והתחל
ובא אביך לראותך ואמרת אליו
תבא נא תמר אחותי
ותכרני לחם
ועשתה לעיני את־הבריה
למען אשר אראה ואכלתי מידה

Another good example of the third group is the rhetorical question in 1 Kings 1:13 (repeated in verses 17, 24 and 30):

(1 Kings 1:13) הלוא־אתה אדני המלך נשבעת לאמתך לאמר
כי־שלמה בנך ימלך אחרי
והוא ישב על־כסאי

2) The author of the Succession Narrative does not normally utilize synonymous words in conjunction with a given

key word. For example, the key word רוץ in 2 Sam. 18:19-27 is repeated twelve times without relief by a related word such as הלך or בוא . Expression through the use of analogous words, so very characteristic of Hebrew poetic parallelism, is apparently less of a stylistic canon for the Hebrew prose writer. The most notable exception to this general rule is the use of two roots, בשׁל and לבב , for the cakes baked by Tamar in 2 Sam. 13:5-10.[1]

3) In the case of phrases and longer units, repetition is normally varied in successive occurrences through the use of synonyms, omissions, additions, or alterations of word order.[2] The great variety which is introduced into repeated phrases, sentences and paragraphs is so pervasive as to force us to conclude that our author has consciously

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[1]Incidentally, the placement of these two words is strictly ordered. The nominal and verbal form of one root word is then followed by the nominal and verbal form of the other, giving the following progression:

וחבשׁה	verse 5
הבשׁיה	5
וחלבב	verse 6
לבבות	6
ואבשׁה	verse 6
הבשׁיה	7
וחלבב	verse 9
הלבבות	9
הבשׁיה	verse 10
ואבשׁה	10
הלבבות	verse 10

[2]Cf. the comments of Gunkel, Legends of Genesis, pp. 83-4 and E. K. Brown, Rhythm in the Novel (Toronto, 1963). pp. 7ff.

attempted to modify these iterations.[1]

We shall illustrate this principle below with pairs or groups of related phrases. In all these examples, the context in which a phrase reappears may require a change of person or other minor alteration of the original phrase, as for example when direct speech in the first person is then repeated in third person narrative. But ignoring these necessary contextual differences, there are further changes which demonstrate the validity of our principle.

Consider, for example, the two different ways in which the wise woman of Tekoa refers to David's divine wisdom:

כי כמלאך האלהים כן אדני המלך (2 Sam. 14:17b)
לשמע הטוב והרע ויהוה יהי עמך

ואדני חכם כחכמת האלהים (2 Sam. 14:20b)
לדעת את־כל־אשר בארץ

Our author's ingenuity is evidenced in his ability to give variety to his expression even when repeating the same phrase many times:

רד לביתך (2 Sam. 11:8)

ולא ירד אל־ביתו (11:9)

לא־ירד אוריה אל־ביתו (11:10a)

מדוע לא־ירדת אל־ביתך (11:10b)

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[1]The principle is by no means confined to the Succession Narrative. Cf. for example Gen. 31:24 and 29; 39:14-15 and 17-18; 42:3b and 5b; I Sam. 17:55, 56, and 58.

(2 Sam. 11:11) ואני אבוא אל־ביתי

(11:13) ואל־ביתו לא ירד

(2 Sam. 7:7) את־עמי את־ישראל

(7:8) על־עמי על־ישראל

(7:10) לעמי לישראל

(7:11) על־עמי ישראל

(7:23) כעמך כישראל

(7:24) את־עמך ישראל

(2 Sam. 14:4) ותפל על־אפיה ארצה ותשתחו

(14:22) ויפל יואב אל־פניו ארצה וישתחו

(14:33) וישתחו לו ויפל[1] על־פניו ארצה

(1 Kings 2:25) וישלח המלך שלמה ביד בניהו בן־יהוידע
ויפגע־בו וימת

(2:34) ויעל בניהו בן־יהוידע
ויפגע־בו וימתהו ויקבר בביתו במדבר

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[1]Adding ויפל with LXX. Evidence from Qumran demonstrates quite convincingly that the LXX presupposes a Vorlage which preserves many readings superior to the MT. Cf. Frank Moore Cross, Jr., The Ancient Library of Qumran (rev. ed., Garden City, New York; 1961), pp. 188-90; idem, "The History of the Biblical Text in the Light of Discoveries in the Judean Desert," HTR, LVII (1964), pp. 281-99; Harry M. Orlinsky, "Qumran and the Present State of Old Testament Studies: The Septuagint Text," JBL, LXXVIII (1959), pp. 26-33; Shemaryahu Talmon, "Aspects of the Textual Transmission of the Bible in the Light of Qumran Manuscripts," Textus, IV (1964), pp. 95-132.

(2:46) ויצו המלך את־בניהו בן־יהוידע ויצא
ויפגע־בו וימת

(2 Sam. 7:26) יהוה צבאות אלהים על־ישראל

(7:27) יהוה צבאות אלהי ישראל

Or one could examine the masterful nine repetitions of the theme ישב על כסא in 1 Kings 1:13-48.

Even formulae citandi are altered in the interest of variety. Observe the skill with which slight variations are introduced in these rather uncreative story elements, as for example in the six different forms of citation for David in 2 Sam. 9:

(9:1 and 6) ויאמר דוד

(9:2) ויאמר המלך אליו

(9:3) ויאמר המלך

(9:4) ויאמר־לו המלך

(9:7) ויאמר לו דוד

(9:9) ויאמר אליו

The second appearance of a phrase may be altered from the first by substitution of an equivalent word or phrase for the original word:

(2 Sam. 13:14) ולא אבה לשמע בקולה

(13:16) ולא אבה לשמע לה

(2 Sam. 11:20) מדוע נגשתם אל־העיר להלחם

(11:21) למה נגשתם אל־החומה

(2 Sam. 13:32) כי־אמנון לבדו מת

(13:33) כי־אם[1] אמנון לבדו מת

(2 Sam. 19:38) ועשה־לו את אשר־טוב בעיניך

(19:39) ואעשה־לו את־הטוב בעיניך

(2 Sam. 15:1) ויעש לו אבשלום מרכבה וסוסים
והמשים איש רצים לפניו

(1 Kings 1:5) ויעש לו רכב ופרשים
והמשים איש רצים לפניו

(1 Kings 2:28) וינס יואב אל־אהל יהוה
ויחזק בקרנות המזבח

(2:29) נס יואב אל־אהל יהוה
והנה אצל המזבח

(2 Sam. 18:29) שלום[2] לנער לאבשלום

(18:32) השלום לנער לאבשלום

(2 Sam. 18:19) כי־שפטו יהוה מיד איביו

(18:31) כי־שפטך יהוה היום מיד כל־הקמים עליך

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[1]While it is possible that אם is an error of dittography, the expression כי אם is defensible and reappears at other points of the corpus (2 Sam. 12:3; 15:21; 19:29).

[2]Again there is no particular difficulty with MT. He interrogative is not mandatory to introduce a question; cf. GK 150a. LXX supports the variation of MT.

A later repetition may differ from the original by adding something to the original. Here frequently the change may be attributed to the progress of the story which demands further information or a change of expression in the second occurrence:

(1 Kings 2:16) שאלה אחת אנכי שאל מאתך
אל־תשבי את־פני

(2:20) שאלה אחת קטנה אנכי שאלת מאתך
אל־תשב את־פני

(2 Sam. 10:15) וירא ארם כי נגף לפני ישראל

(10:19) ויראו כל־המלכים עבדי הדדעזר כי נגפו לפני
ישראל

(2 Sam. 14:24b) ויסב אבשלום אל־ביתו ופני המלך לא ראה

(14:28) וישב אבשלום בירושלם שנתים ימים ופני המלך
לא ראה

(2 Sam. 15:16a) ויצא המלך וכל־ביתו ברגליו

(15:17) ויצא המלך וכל־העם ברגליו

Conversely, the second repetition may omit part of the first:

(2 Sam. 18:17) וכל־ישראל נסו איש לאהליו

(19:9) וישראל נס איש לאהליו[1]

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[1]Reading the Qere לאהליו.

(2 Sam. 14:29a) ולא אבה לבוא אליו

(14:29b) ולא אבה לבוא

(1 Kings 1:14) והנה עודך מדברת שם עם־המלך[1]

(1:22) והנה עודנה מדברת עם־המלך

(2 Sam. 13:32) את כל־הנערים בני־המלך המיתו

(13:33) כל־בני המלך מתו

(2 Sam. 19:12) למה תהיו אתרנים להשיב את־המלך אל־ביתו

(19:13) ולמה תהיו אתרנים להשיב את־המלך

The variation may be as slight as the omission of a single letter:

(2 Sam. 15:2) כל־האיש[2] אשר־יהיה־לו־ריב

(15:4) כל־איש אשר־יהיה־לו־ריב

(2 Sam. 15:35) כל־הדבר אשר תשמע

(15:36) כל־דבר אשר תשמעו

There is a tendency to abbreviate successive repetitions. For example, Jonadab's plan for Amnon is shortened slightly in the retelling:

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[1] Reading והנה with the versions.

[2] כל האיש is the collective singular, with S. R. Driver, Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel (2nd ed.; Oxford, 1915), p. 310. Although LXX has πᾶς ἀνήρ at both 2 Sam. 15:2 and 15:4, there is no problem with the variation of MT. Cf. LXX and MT of Deut. 4:3.

Jonadab's plan 2 Sam. 13:5	Execution of the plan 2 Sam. 13:6
שכב על־משכבך והתחל	וישכב אמנון ויתחל
ובא אביך לראותך	ויבא המלך לראתו
ואמרת אליו	ויאמר אמנון אל־המלך
תבא נא תמר אחותי	תבא־נא תמר אחותי
ותכרני לחם	
ועשתה לעיני את־הבריה	ותלבב לעיני שתי לבבות
למען אשר אראה ואכלתי מידה	ואברה מידה

The second notice of Absalom's flight to Geshur is considerably shorter:

(2 Sam. 13:37) ואבשלום ברח וילך אל־תלמי בן־עמיהוד[1]
מלך גשור

(13:38) ואבשלום ברח וילך גשור

Each successive account of Ahimaaz' attempts to carry news from the battlefield to David is more briefly related than the report preceding:

I. (2 Sam. 18:19-20) ואחימעץ בן־צדוק אמר
ארוצה נא ואבשרה את־המלך
כי־שפטו יהוה מיד איביו
ויאמר לו יואב
לא איש בשרה אתה היום הזה
ובשרת ביום אחר
והיום הזה לא תבשר
כי־על בן־המלך מת

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[1]Reading עמיהוד with the Qere and versions.

II. (18:22) ויסף עוד אחימעץ בן־צדוק ויאמר אל־יואב
ויהי מה ארצה־נא גם־אני אחרי הכושי
ויאמר יואב
למה־זה אתה רץ בני
ולכה אין־בשורה מצאת

(18:23) ויאמר[1]
ויהי־מה ארוץ
ויאמר לו
רוץ

While we naturally expect the fullest descriptive detail in the first of these repeated episodes, the remarkably brief account of the third request suggests that our author deliberately abbreviated his repetitions in order to expedite the story and maintain the interest of his audience.[2] Even the formulae citandi become shorter.[3]

Repetition in which a prior message or event is retold may express the event or message in a quite different way, but without violating the basic facts. The evidence here suggests that changes were deliberately introduced in order to avoid the monotony of verbatim repetition.

The account of Adonijah's revolt is given three

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[1]Adding ויאמר with LXX, Syriac and Vulgate.

[2]Cf. Lord, The Singer of Tales, p. 85. The phenomenom is common in the Old Testament; see for example 1 Sam. 14:24 and 28; 24:5b and 6b; 28:6 and 15.

[3]Similarly in Hos. 1:2, 4, 6 and 9.

times in 1 Kings 1:9-27. The events are first described in narrative (1 Kings 1:9-10) and then repeated twice in the reports of Bathsheba (1 Kings 1:19) and Nathan (1 Kings 1:25-26) to David. The list of those invited to the coronation feast of Adonijah differs in all three descriptions:

(1 Kings 1:9) ויקרא את־כל־אחיו בני המלך ולכל־אנשי יהודה עבדי המלך

(1:19) ויקרא לכל־בני המלך ולאביתר הכהן וליואב שר הצבא

(1:25) ויקרא לכל־בני המלך ולשרי הצבא ולאביתר הכהן

The list of those not invited also varies:

(1 Kings 1:10) ואת־נתן הנביא ובניהו ואת־הגבורים ואת־שלמה לא קרא

(1:19) ולשלמה עבדך לא קרא

(1:26) ולי אני־עבדך ולצדוק הכהן ולבניהו בן־יהוידע ולשלמה עבדך לא קרא

The same technique of varying iterations is utilized in the thrice-repeated account of the coronation of Solomon (1 Kings 1:32-48). We will discuss the pattern of that section in Chapter III.

Even specific messages are altered in the retelling. The most appropriate example of this is the wording of David's command to his chief officers to spare Absalom and the slightly different rendering given by the soldier in reminding Joab of this order:

לעט־לי לנער לאבשלום (2 Sam. 18:5)

שמרו לי[1] בנער באבשלום (2 Sam. 18:12)

Again, Jonathan and Ahimaaz are told to convey a message to David, and they do so, but not verbatim:

Message

אל תלן הלילה בעברות[2] המדבר (2 Sam. 17:16)
וגם עבור תעבור
פן יבלע למלך ולכל העם אשר אתו

Report

קומו ועברו מהרה את המים (2 Sam. 17:21)
כי ככה יעץ עליכם אחיתפל

Similarly, David's oath to Shimei and his later reference to it differ:[3]

לא תמות (1 Sam. 19:24)

אם־אמיתך בחרב (1 Kings 2:8)

Or consider Solomon's encounter with Shimei and the king's subsequent recollection of the episode. Here we notice that the retelling of the event is much more condensed than the original, and yet employs much of the same vocabulary:

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[1]Reading לי with the versions for the difficult MT מי.

[2]Reading the Ketib בעברות.

[3]Similarly Gen. 27:3-4 and 7; 1 Sam. 20:6 and 29; 1 Sam. 20:22 and 37, 1 Sam. 20:21 and 36.

1 Kings 2:36-38

וישלח המלך ויקרא לשמעי ויאמר לו
בנה־לך בית בירושלם וישבת שם
ולא־תצא משם אנה ואנה
והיה ביום צאתך ועברת את־נחל קדרון
ידע תדע כי מות תמות
דמך יהיה בראשך
ויאמר שמעי למלך
טוב הדבר
כאשר דבר אדני המלך כן יעשה עבדך

1 Kings 2:42

וישלח המלך ויקרא לשמעי ויאמר אליו
הלוא השבעתיך ביהוה ואעד בך לאמר
ביום צאתך והלכת אנה ואנה
ידע תדע כי מות תמות
ותאמר אלי
טוב הדבר שמעתי

There are very few exceptions to the general rule that repetitions of phrases and longer units take place with variation. In three passages, in all of which a command is given and its execution then narrated, repetition may be said to be virtually identical:

הוציאו כל־איש מעלי (2 Sam. 13:9)
ויצאו כל־איש מעליו

יסב אל־ביתו ופני לא יראה (2 Sam. 14:24)
ויסב אבשלום אל־ביתו ופני המלך לא ראה

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בוא אל־פלגשי אביך (2 Sam. 16:21)

ויבא אבשלום אל־פלגשי אביו (16:22)

In two instances the identical repetition occurs once in narration and once in speech:

speech	הנה בני־המלך באו	(2 Sam. 13:35)
narrative	והנה בני־המלך באו	(13:36)
narrative	והנה־איש רץ לבדו	(2 Sam. 18:24)
speech	הנה־איש רץ לבדו	(18:26)

Finally, the last halves of two adjoining phrases in 2 Sam. 18:3 are identical:

כי אם־נס ננוס לא־ישימו אלינו לב
ואם־ימתו חצינו לא־ישימו אלינו לב

2. Ring Composition

The simplest way of structuring a narrative unit is to repeat at the close a word or phrase from the beginning. Such iteration at the extremes of the unit provides a frame for the whole and signals arrival at the termination point. This technique is known as <u>inclusio</u> or ring composition. Lohr states well the rationale of this rhetorical formulation:

> It takes its origin from the necessity in oral literature that a hearer be able to tell that a poem is concluded. Such a desire to frame separate sections is inherent in the oral style, and is found in ballads,

> speeches and even ordinary conversations....Because inclusio forces the attention of the audience back from the conclusion of a passage to its beginning, it can be used to interconnect the parts of a story.[1]

Since it is such a clear demarcation of the limits of a unit, we should expect that ring composition would aid in preservation of a tradition in the course of its transmission.[2] On the basis of the numerous examples of inclusio in the Succession Narrative, we shall suggest that ring composition was a conscious principle used in composing speeches in ancient Israel.[3] We shall consider first those examples of inclusio in narrative description, and then discuss the same technique as it appears in characters' speeches in the Succession Narrative.

2 Sam. 14:25-27

As our first example we take a small section

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[1]Lohr, "Oral Techniques in the Gospel of Matthew, p. 409.

[2]The mere presence of chiastic and ring composition in the Succession Narrative leads to no firm conclusions as to an oral or written origin of the corpus. The historically prior use of these techniques was logically an oral one, but there is no reason to suppose that the same techniques did not continue when written literature developed. Cf. the discussion of Culley, "An Approach to the Problem of Oral Tradition," VT, XIII (1963), pp. 113-25.

[3]The presence of inclusio in Hebrew poetry is widely acknowledged. Cf. Richard G. Moulton, The Literary Study of the Bible (2nd. ed.; Boston, 1899), pp. 56-58; Franz Landsberger, "Poetic Units in the Song of Songs," JBL, LXXIII (1954), pp. 203-16; Mitchell Dahood, Psalms (Garden City, New York; 1966ff.), passim. The same technique is present in the mythological texts from Ugarit; cf. Albrecht Goetze, "The Nikkal Poem from Ras-Shamra," JBL, LX (1941), pp. 353-74.

generally regarded as an interruption in the flow of the story of Absalom's banishment from his father's presence. This short pause is based on and framed by the theme of beauty. It begins with lavish praise of Absalom (verses 25-26) and concludes with a parallel comment on the beauty of his daughter Tamar (verse 27b). The center of the narrative elaborates in great detail on Absalom's magnificent head of hair. From the context we must conclude that this hair was regarded as of great beauty also:[1]

A וכאבשלום לא־היה איש־יפה בכל־ישראל להלל מאד
מכף רגליו ועד קדקדו לא־היה בו מום ובגלחו
את־ראשו והיה מקץ ימים לימים אשר יגלח כי־
כבד עליו ויגלחו ושקל את־שער ראשו מאתים
שקלים באבן המלך ויולדו לאבשלום שלושה בנים
A' ובת אחת ושמה תמר היא היתה אשה יפת מראה

2 Sam. 20:1-22

An entire narrative may be enclosed in ring composition, as is the case with the account of the revolt of Sheba the son of Bichri. The inclusio is signaled by repetition of two phrases, ויתקע בשפר and איש לאהליו. At the

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[1]G. R. Driver, "Plurima Mortis Imago," in Studies and Essays in Honor of Abraham A. Neuman, ed. Meir Ben-Horin, et. al. (Leiden, 1962), pp. 128-43 has argued quite persuasively that this passage has no connection with the account of Absalom hanging in the tree in 2 Sam. 18. There is nothing in the Hebrew text there to suggest that his hair became entangled, and it is more likely that his neck became wedged in the fork of a tree branch.

very beginning of the story, Sheba summons his forces for rebellion:

(2 Sam. 20:1) ושם נקרא איש בליעל ושמו שבע בן־בכרי
איש ימיני ויתקע בשפר ויאמר
אין־לנו חלק בדוד ולא נחלה־לנו בבן־ישי
איש לאהליו ישראל

At the conclusion, with Sheba eliminated, Joab's identical action indicates the termination of the narrative:

(2 Sam. 20:22) ויתקע בשפר ויפצו מעל־העיר איש לאהליו
ויואב שב ירושלם אל־המלך

2 Sam. 20:16-20

Within the same story, the lengthy dialogue between Joab and the woman of Abel of Beth-maacah is a distinct scene, and it too is set off by an inclusio. The episode begins as an אשה חכמה calls to Joab from the besieged city (verse 16). She persuades him to withdraw from the city after receiving the head of Sheba the son of Bichri. At the conclusion of the episode (verse 22) we are told that the woman went to her people בחכמתה and that they threw Sheba's head over the wall. Only at the opening and the close of the episode is mention made of the woman's wisdom; elsewhere she is simply referred to as האשה or with the third person pronoun. The phrase אשה חכמה stresses the essential attribute of the woman who saved both her city and possibly also David's kingdom from Sheba the son of Bichri, the איש בליעל

(verse 1)! Repetition of the phrase appears to be a deliberate indication of arrival at the conclusion of the story.

The following examples of inclusio all occur in speeches within the Succession Narrative. The frequency of the use of ring composition in these speeches suggests that the technique of framing a discourse with repetition was consciously cultivated by the Hebrew rhetorician. It is also noteworthy that in many of these examples the words of the inclusio can be said to constitute the basic theme of the address; the content of the inclusio is frequently the foundation from which our speaker has developed the remainder of his speech.

2 Sam. 12:13b-14

Nathan's judgement of David in these verses is framed by phrases beginning with the particle גם and ending with the verb מות. The inclusio thereby constructed operates on the basis of a contrast: on the one hand, David shall not die, but on the other hand, the son born to him shall die:[1]

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[1]We delete אויבי with A. Geiger and virtually all scholars since him. The word was added by a scribe who considered the statement too harsh otherwise. For further discussion of 2 Sam. 12:14, see M. J. Mulder, "Un euphémisme dans 2 Sam. XII 14?" VT, XVIII (1968), pp. 108-14 and Reuven Yaron, "The Coptos decree and 2 Sam. xii 14," VT, IX (1959), pp. 89-91.

A גם־יהוה העביר חטאתך לא תמות
אפס כי־נאץ נאצת את־יהוה בדבר הזה
A' גם הבן הילוד לך מות ימות

1 Kings 2:26

Solomon's speech in banishing Abiathar employs an inclusio based on paronomasia. The new king begins by ordering Abiathar into isolation at Anathoth, continues in the body of the speech to state that the priest deserves to die but that this will not happen as yet, for he bore the ark of the Lord before David, and then concludes with a deliberate pun on the name Anathoth:

A ענתת לך על־שדיך כי איש מות אתה
וביום הזה לא אמיתך
כי־נשאת את־ארון אדני יהוה לפני דוד אבי
A' וכי התעניתה בכל אשר־התענה אבי

2 Sam. 16:7b-8

Shimei's curse of David is enclosed by the words "man of blood-guilt" and these words constitute the basis of his condemnation. The rest of the speech simply elaborates on this by stating that David is guilty of usurping the throne from Saul, and that therefore Yahweh should requite the blood of the house of Saul upon him:[1]

[1]The question of possible reference in Shimei's curse to the account of the hanging of seven sons of Saul (2 Sam. 21:1-14) is complex and cannot be considered in

A צא צא איש הדמים ואיש הבליעל
השיב עליך יהוה כל דמי בית־שאול
אשר מלכת תחתיו[1]
ויתן יהוה את־המלוכה ביד אבשלום בנך
A' והנך בר־עתך כי איש דמים אתה

2 Sam. 19:12-13

Here a politically astute David urges the Judahites to rally quickly to him now that Absalom's forces have been defeated. The king's rhetorical question at the extremes of his message is the essence of what he is attempting to convey; the center simply states, in emphatic terms, "You are my brothers, you are my flesh and blood".[2]

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detail here. Many modern commentators claim that the latter account originally preceded 2 Sam. 9 and that here Shimei makes reference to those prior slayings. But the solution of these scholars is at least not the only possibility. Equally plausible is the position of Caspari, Die Samuelbücher, p. 504; Whybray, op. cit., p. 8; Rost, Thronnachfolge, p. 192; M. H. Segal, "Studies in the Books of Samuel," JQR, IX (1918-19), pp. 54-55; and Samuel Amsler, David, Roi et Messie (Neuchatel, 1963), p. 26, n. 6. These individuals consider 2 Sam. 21:1-14 to be a separate tradition, that the reference to David's blood-guilt here pertains to the death of Ishbaal and Abner, and that 2 Sam. 9 simply refers to the traditions of David's חסד relation with Jonathan (1 Sam. 18:1ff.; 20:35ff. and 23:16-18). For a very detailed analysis of the two points of view, see Carlson, David, the Chosen King, pp. 198ff. J. Weingreen, "The Rebellion of Absalom," VT, XIX (1969), pp. 263-66 connects the phrase "man of blood" with David's ruthless military policies, undertaken in disregard of his own people.

[1]Reading the Qere תחתיו at verse 8.

[2]We transpose verse 12b before 12a, with most modern commentators. The scribe was confused by the three-fold repetition of להשיב את המלך (אל ביתו) in verses 11-13.

A למה תהיו אתרנים להשיב את־המלך אל־ביתו
אחי אתם עצמי ובשרי אתם
A' ולמה תהיו אתרנים להשיב את־המלך

1 Kings 1:24-27

This speech of Nathan to David is ringed by repetition of the theme, "Who will sit on the throne of David after him?" As in the previous example, the speech begins with a rhetorical question:

(1 Kings 1:24) אדני המלך אתה אמרת
אדניהו ימלך אחרי והוא ישב על־כסאי

The body of the address describes in detail the actions of the conspirators leading to the proclamation of Adonijah as the new king. Nathan then concludes as he began:[1]

(1 Kings 1:27) אם מאת אדני המלך נהיה הדבר הזה
ולא הודעת את־עבדך[2]
מי ישב על־כסא אדני־המלך אחריו

2 Sam. 13:32-33

Jonathan's speech is framed with an inclusio consisting of three phrases. Each of the three opening phrases of

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[1]But note that Bathsheba's speech (1 Kings 1:17-21), constructed otherwise in parallel with Nathan's speech, does not end with what would be a fine inclusio at verse 20b but rather continues for another verse.

[2]Reading the singular עבדך with the Qere.

the ring composition (lettered below for convenience) differs somewhat from its counterpart at the close of the speech, in keeping with the compositional principle discussed in the first section of this chapter. But these variations do not conceal the obvious parallels, and the listener realizes that the beginning and the end are equivalent:

a אל־יאמר אדני
b את כל־הנערים בני־המלך המיתו
c כי־אמנון לבדו מת

כי־על־פי אבשלום היתה שומה
מיום ענתו את תמר אחתו

a' ועתה אל־ישם אדני המלך אל־לבו דבר לאמר
b' כל־בני המלך מתו
c' כי־אם[1] אמנון לבדו מת

1 Kings 2:42-43

Solomon's accusation of Shimei opens with his reminding him first of his solemn oath to Yahweh and then referring to Solomon's own charge to him; the speech closes in identical fashion. The center of the speech merely elaborates on the second of the two elements of the inclusio, rendering in dialogue Solomon's conditional agreement with Shimei and the latter's assent to the terms:

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[1]Retaining MT כי־אם . See above, p. 28, n. 1.

A הלוא השבעתיך ביהוה ואעד בך לאמר

ביום צאתך והלכת אנה ואנה
ידע תדע כי מות תמות
ותאמר אלי
טוב הדבר שמעתי

ומדוע לא שמרת את שבעת יהוה
A' ואת־המצוה אשר־צויתי עליך

2 Sam. 17:8-10

Finally and most masterfully, Hushai's refutation of the counsel of Ahitophel utilizes ring composition. Hushai begins with the statement:

אתה ידעת את־אביך ואת־אנשיו כי גברים המה (2 Sam. 17:8)

These opening words constitute the basic premise of Hushai's argument. That is, David and his men are not, as Ahitophel has just reasoned (2 Sam. 17:1-3), in a weak situation. Hushai details his point of view with further expansive language, likening David and his troops to a bear enraged at being robbed of her cubs, and reasoning that David will make a surprise attack which will terrify the bravest. All of this is of course highly ironic in the light of David's hasty retreat from Jerusalem! Hushai concludes by repeating the statement with which he opened:

כי־ידע כל־ישראל כי־גבור אביך (2 Sam. 17:10b)
ובני־חיל אשר אתו

Here again we have an address built from a basic theme established at the very beginning and then reiterated at the close. Having denied Ahitophel's counsel, Hushai then goes on (verses 11-14) to present his own advice, beginning with the words כי יעצת .

We have suggested above that one function of ring composition is that it serves to stabilize the material it encloses. We can appreciate that if structure is given to a speech, that speech would be more likely to resist changes over a period of time than would a less structured unit. Ring composition, which frames a speech and defines its limits, does exactly that.

In the last two speeches we have considered we can see how our author may have consciously chosen to preserve instances of inclusio. Hushai is introduced by the narrator in 2 Sam. 17:7 and he makes a preliminary remark. Then, in 17:8, our author gives a second formula citandi for Hushai, and he speaks again. No other person speaks between these two verses, and no action is narrated. Why then the second, seemingly unnecessary formula citandi? Because the second introduction at 17:8 separates Hushai's speech in verses 8-10, which is framed by an inclusio, from his preliminary remark in verse 7, which would spoil the inclusio if not distinguished in some way from what follows. Thus we have the following:

(17:7) ויאמר חושי אל־אבשלום
לא־טובה העצה אשר־יעץ אחיתפל בפעם הזאת

(17:8) ויאמר חושי
A אתה ידעת את־אביך ואת־אנשיו כי גברים המה

inclusio

A' (17:10) כי־ידע כל־ישראל כי־גבור אביך
ובני־חיל אשר אתו

The same technique appears in Solomon's accusation of Shimei (1 Kings 2:42-43). Verses 42-45 are a single uninterrupted address to Shimei, but the ring composition (verses 42-43) is distinguished from what follows by a second formula citandi which comes immediately after the portion which was framed by an inclusio:

(2:42) וישלח המלך ויקרא לשמעי ויאמר אליו

A הלוא השבעתיך ביהוה ואעד בך

inclusio

A' ומדוע לא שמרת את שבעת יהוה
ואת־המצוה אשר־צויתי עליך

(2:44) ויאמר המלך אל־שמעי
אתה ידעת

3. Chiastic Composition

Like ring composition, chiastic composition returns at the close to repeat a portion of the beginning. But there

are further repetitions in a chiastic unit, and these repetitions penetrate to the very center of the account.[1] The simplest form of a chiasm is one with four elements, arranged in the following relation:

a
b
b'
a'

But chiasmus need not be limited to four members only; indeed, there is no limit to the number of elements of the structure which may be paired.

In practically all the examples of chiasm which we have identified in the Succession Narrative, the structure has a single element in the center which is not paired with another element. This portion constitutes the focus of the chiasm, and may be diagrammed as follows:

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[1]The organizing of a literary unit in the form of chiasmus has been widely confirmed. Cf. Cedric H. Whitman, Homer and the Heroic Tradition (Cambridge, Mass.; 1958), pp. 252-84; John L. Myres, Herodotus, Father of History (Oxford, 1953), pp. 89-134; G. E. Duckworth, Structural Patterns and Proportions in Vergil's Aeneid (Ann Arbor, 1962), and see further the classical and New Testament studies cited by Lohr, op. cit., pp. 425-26 and by Charles H. Talbert, "Artistry and Theology: An Analysis of the Architecture of Jn 1,19-5,47," CBQ, XXXII (1970), pp. 360-63. Representative Old Testament studies on chiastic structure include A. Condamin, "Symmetrical Repetitions in Lamentations, Chapters I and II," JTS, VII (1905-06), pp. 137-40; idem, Poèmes de la Bible (Paris, 1933), passim; G. B. Gray, The Forms of Hebrew Poetry (London, 1915), pp. 64-72; R. Pesch, "Zur konzentrischen Struktur von Jona 1," Bib., XLVII (1966), pp. 517-58; Stephen Bertman, "Symmetrical Design in the Book of Ruth," JBL, LXXXIV (1965), pp. 165-68. Lund, op. cit., pp. 35ff. summarizes the Biblical studies on chiasmus up to his own day.

a
b
c
b'
a'

Furthermore, it can be said that the center of the chiasm is normally the most important part of the structure so that the story builds to this point and then falls away from it. The center is the turning point and the climax of the action in most instances.[1]

A chiasm may be based on a series of key words, or a series of phrases may parallel one another, or even parallel concepts of ideas may constitute the elements of the order. Nor does the chiasm have to adhere to a single type of element throughout; Lund offers Isa. 60:1-3 as an example where the extremes and the center of the chiasm have parallel ideas, while the rest is based on parallel words.[2] Moreover, while the paired elements must have a clear relation to each other, that relation need not be one of identity; there are numerous instances where opposites are paired, and the second half of the chiasm is then the antithesis of the first half. Of course, we need to be careful here lest we allow our criteria to become too fluid, and find chiasmus where none was intended.[3] Generally speaking, we expect that the

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[1]Cf. Lund, op. cit., pp. 40ff. and Lohr, op. cit., p. 424.

[2]Lund, op. cit., p. 44.

[3]Lund, op. cit., p. 91 makes this mistake in attempting to demonstrate a chiastic arrangement for 2 Sam. 13:1-1 Kings 3:28. The parallels he adduces are simply not significant.

paired elements of a chiasm of considerable length would be of approximately the same length, although we do not think that every element of a chiasm has to display uniformity of size.

2 Sam. 13:1-22

The account of the rape of Tamar is a consummate example of Hebrew narrative style. Because so many prose literary techniques are utilized masterfully here, it will attract our attention throughout this thesis. At the moment we are concerned with the chiastic structure which orders this passage. This may be outlined as follows:

A. Amnon is in love with Tamar his sister (verses 1-2).

B. Jonadab intervenes (verses 3-5).

C. Tamar comes to Amnon and bakes bread for him (verses 6-9a).

D. Amnon commands his servants to leave him alone with Tamar (verse 9b).

E. Amnon commands Tamar to come lie with him; she refuses and pleads with him but to no avail (verses 11-14a).

F. Amnon rapes Tamar, and his love for her turns to hate (verses 14b-15a).

E'. Amnon commands Tamar to get out; she pleads with him but to no avail (verses 15b-16).

D'. Amnon calls his servant back and orders him to lock Tamar out (verse 17).

XUM

C'. Tamar leaves with gestures of mourning (verses 18-19).

B'. Absalom intervenes (verse 20).

A'. Absalom hates Amnon for having raped Tamar (verses 21-22).

Let us consider the parts of the structure in greater detail. Element A: The major dramatis personae, Absalom, Amnon and Tamar, are all quickly introduced in the very first verse:

(verse 1) ויהי אחרי־כן ולאבשלום בן־דוד אחות יפה
ושמה תמר ויאהבה אמנון בן־דוד

Actually Tamar is really little more than a tragic foil for the primary conflict, that of the two brothers. This is conveyed emphatically in the Hebrew by the secondary placement of Tamar's name after the more significant information, that she is the sister of Absalom:

(verse 1) ולאבשלום בן־דוד אחות יפה ושמה תמר

Similarly, in verse 4 Amnon's mention of Tamar is followed immediately by reference to his brother Absalom and only then by his declaration of love for her:

(verse 4) את־תמר אחות אבשלום אחי אני אהב

The first two verses (element A) introduce the major characters and tell us of Amnon's love for Tamar. The counterpart of these verses concludes the pericope (A'- verses 21-22). As at the opening of the story, descriptive narrative rather than dialogue predominates.

But now our author tells us that the obsessive love (אהב) of Amnon for his sister has passed away (verse 15), and in its place is described Absalom's hatred (שנא -verse 22) of his brother. In closing the story, the situations of the characters are again described. Tamar dwells in her grief with her brother Absalom. Amnon's father is angry with him, but does nothing because of his love (אהב) of his first-born son,[1] while Absalom will not speak to his brother, so extreme is his hatred of him for having raped Tamar. Verse 22b concludes the pericope in typical Hebrew narrative style, by first pointing forward to events to follow (ולא־דבר אבשלום עם־אמנון למרע ועד־טוב כי־שנא אבשלום את־אמנון) and then briefly summarizing the events which have taken place (על־דבר אשר ענה את תמר אחותו).

Element B (verses 3-5) brings Jonadab into the story, and we learn of his plan for Amnon. Balancing this is the parallel intervention of Absalom immediately following the rape (element B'- verse 20). If Jonadab's appearance precipitates the action, the fact that Absalom happens to see his disheveled sister afterward will be of disastrous consequences for the sequel to our story.

In contrast to the rather concise statement with which he opens the story, our narrator expands at length on the way in which Amnon is finally able to get Tamar his

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[1]Reading the fuller account of LXX at 13:21. The scribe could have overlooked this by allowing his eye to skip to the second ולא .

sister to his bedside (element C-verses 6-9a). Amnon repeats Jonadab's plan to David and he in turn unwittingly makes the request of his daughter Tamar. She comes to Amnon's house. And now the narrative draws out the suspense still further in elaborate description of the baking of the לבבות (verses 8b-9a).

The account of the departure of Tamar following her rape (C' -verses 18-19) balances the earlier passage relating her arrival. Again narrative rather than dialogue predominates, and again seemingly insignificant details occupy our attention. Tamar's dress is described and then she rends it dramatically; the once beautiful woman places ashes on her head and wails aloud in her grief.

Progressing further toward the center of the chiasm, we have Amnon's command to his servants to leave (D - verse 9b) which achieves Amnon's desire to be alone with Tamar, and its counterpart following the rape when he summons his "boy" and commands him to cast the now unwanted object of contempt (את־זאת) from the house (D' - verse 17).[1]

On either side of the apex of the chiasm are identical scenes (verses 11-14a and 15b-16) consisting of 1) Amnon's command to Tamar, 2) her eloquent response and 3) his ignoring of her request. We display below the striking common elements of these scenes:

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[1]Read the singular imperative שלח for MT שלחו at verse 17.

E - verses 11-14a	E' - verses 15b-16
ויאמר לה	ויאמר לה אמנון
בואי שכבי עמי אחותי	קומי לכי
ותאמר לו	ותאמר לו
אל־אחי אל־תעננני כי	אל־אחי כי[1]
ולא אבה לשמע בקולה	ולא אבה לשמע לה

Amnon's first command, "Come and lie with me, my sister," contrasts sharply with his subsequent impersonal "Get out!' Tamar's plea in both cases begins with "No, my brother," and continues with her reasons, introduced both times by כי. No reply of Amnon is given either time, simply the brief notice that "he would not listen to her."

The center of the chiasm (F - verses 14b-15a) is reached as the rape takes place. Immediately following the deed our narrator informs us that Amnon's feeling for Tamar has reversed; his love to the point of sickness (verse 2) has now become a "very great hatred" (verse 15). The antithesis of emotion described here highlights the series

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[1]Reading אל־אחי כי at verse 16 with Lucian's recension of the LXX and Julius Wellhausen, Der Text der Bücher Samuelis (Göttingen, 1871), pp. 186-87; Karl Budde, Die Bücher Samuel (Tübingen, 1902), pp. 261-62; Driver, Notes on...Samuel, p. 299; Roland de Vaux, Les livres de Samuel (Paris, 1961), p. 194. The Massoretic text is untranslatable. For the less crucial variations in the rest of verse 16 between Lucian and Vaticanus, see Driver, Notes on...Samuel, p. 299. The Lucianic recension frequently provides a superior reading to MT of the Succession Narrative. Cf. Driver's comments, ibid., pp. xlviii-li.

of contrasts on which the entire chiastic structure is built.[1] The beautiful Tamar comes innocently to her brother (C), but leaves with her life shattered, her virginity lost (C'). Amnon pushes his servants out that he might be alone with Tamar (D) but then calls one back to dispose of her (D'). Amnon's coaxing his sister into a private room with him (E) contrasts sharply with the curt manner in which he dispatches her after satisfying his lust (E').

The major contrast is of course that of love (אהב) and hate (שנא). This theme appears vividly at the extremes (A and A') and at the center (F) of the chiasm.[2] Amnon's love for Tamar is of passing moment, and turns to hate after he forces her. David loves his son Amnon and cannot bring himself to say a harsh word to him.[3] But Absalom hates his brother. The story focuses at the comment by the narrator in verse 15a, which itself begins with a chiastic word order:[4]

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[1]Olrik, op. cit., pp. 6-7 speaks of the law of contrast (Gegensatz) in folk literature; the technique is emphasized by Bourke, op. cit. and by Gunkel, Legends of Genesis, pp. 73-74.

[2]A feature of Hebrew chiasmus noted by Lund, op. cit., p. 41.

[3]Reading LXX at 13:21. See n. 1, p. 52.

[4]Note also the unusual way of expressing the comparative, and again at the close of the Succession Narrative (1 Kings 1:47). I am indebted to Dr. Jonas Greenfield for pointing this out to me.

וישנאה אמנון שנאה גדולה כי גדולה השנאה אשר שנאה
a' b' c' c b a

מאהבה אשר אהבה

2 Sam. 10:15-19a

The account of David's campaign against the Syrians is structured as a chiasm:[1]

A. The Syrians saw that they had been defeated by Israel (verse 15 - וירא ארם כי נגף לפני ישראל).

B. Shobach, the commander of the army, leads out the Syrians (verse 16b).

C. David learns of this (verse 17a).

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[1]David's campaign against the Syrians in these verses appears to be out of place, for the following reasons: 2 Sam. 10-12 relates the war against the Ammonites, and the episode between David and Bathsheba which takes place during that war. In the section in question no mention is made of the Ammonites. Both before and after the questionable unit, Joab rather than David is in charge of the army of Israel. In 10:6, Syrians are hired as mercenaries to aid the Ammonites, whereas here the Syrians are fighting entirely on their own. The summoning of the Syrians as a single force from beyond the Euphrates (verse 16) under the central leadership of Hadadezar does not accord with verse 6, where the Syrians are described as being hired by the Ammonites as autonomous city-states. Finally, the transitions before and after this unit are awkwardly accomplished. Verse 14b ends abruptly with Joab breaking off the fighting without any victory over the Ammonites, while verse 19b seems superfluous after the notice in 19a that the Syrians made peace with Israel and became their subjects. Then too, verse 19b could easily follow verse 14, providing a smoother conclusion to the end of Joab's first campaign against Ammon. The account of the second Ammonite campaign in the following spring (11:1) could pick up from this point. This kind of argumentation leads H. P. Smith, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel (New York, 1899), Budde, op. cit., p. 249 and George Caird, "The First and Second Books of Samuel," IB, II, pp. 1096-97 to regard verses 15-19a as a later insertion.

D. All Israel comes out to battle (verse 17a).

E. The Syrians fight David at Helam (verse 17b).

D'. The Syrians flee from Israel (verse 18a).

C'. David slays 700 chariot teams and 40,000 men (verse 18a).[1]

B'. Shobach, commander of the army, dies there (verse 18b).

A'. All the kings who served Hadadezar saw that they had been defeated by Israel (verse 19a- וירא כל־המלכים עבדי הדדעזר כי נגפו לפני ישראל).

The opening and closing use identical terminology and are particularly convincing parallels. Element B introduces Shobach, whose death at B' signals the defeat of the Syrians. The order of the names David and Israel is inverted as we move away from the apex of the chiasm (C and C', D and D'). The center (E) gives a concise summary of the essential data of this unit of tradition, and is appropriately reached as the battle is joined. With the exception of the opening and closing phrases, the chiasm is built throughout on the placement of names.

2 Sam. 16:5-14

The episode of David and Shimei is another small unit of tradition which has been organized in a chiasm to facilitate its preservation and transmission:

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[1]Reading איש רגלי in verse 18 with 1 Chr. 19:18.

A. David comes to Bahurim
(verse 5a - ובא המלך דוד עד־בחורים).

B. Shimei comes out from there, cursing and stoning David (verses 5b-6)

והנה משם איש יוצא ממשפחת בית־שאול ושמו שמעי בן־
גרא יצא יצוא ומקלל ויסקל באבנים את־דוד ואת־כל־
עבדי המלך דוד וכל־העם וכל־הגבורים מימינו ומשמאלו

C. Speeches: the curse of Shimei, intervention of Abishai, and reply of David (verses 7-12).

B'. Shimei follows David, cursing and stoning (verse 13)[1]

ושמעי הלך בצלע ההר לעמתו הלוך ויקלל ויסקל באבנים

A'. David arrives weary at his destination (verse 14).[2]
ויבא המלך וכל־העם אשר־אתו עיפים וינפש שם

The unit begins and ends with information as to David's station on his journay. In verse 5a David draws near Bahurim, while in verse 14 he arrives weary at his destination and rests there. A new episode begins with the verse following as the scene shifts to Absalom in Jerusalem.

Narration at points B and B' describes Shimei cursing David and heaping dirt and rocks upon him and on all his company. Here too the parallels between the two

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[1]Omit the second לעמתו with Titkin, Kritische Untersuchungen zu den Büchern Samuelis (Göttingen, 1922), p. 58; Smith, op. cit., p. 349 and de Vaux, Les livres de Samuel, p. 209.

[2]The location of David's resting place appears to have fallen out of the Hebrew; Lucian adds here ἐπὶ τοῦ Ἰορδάνου.

elements are stylistically obvious. Not only do we have the phrases "cursing and throwing stones" in both places (verses 5b-62 and verse 13) but also, immediately preceding these phrases, we have identical verbal constructions using the participle followed by the infinitive absolute (יָצֹא יָצָא - verse 5b, and הָלוֹךְ ... הָלַךְ - verse 13b).

The most important part of the chiasm, the center, breaks into dialogue. Shimei pronounces his curse, Abishai attempts to intervene, and David replies, first to Abishai (verse 10). David's second speech (verses 11-12), introduced by a second formula citandi, is directed to "Abishai and all his servants" but actually responds to and counteracts Shimei's curse. David deals directly here with the very words with which Shimei cursed him, but turns them to his own advantage. His address is deliberately built on the key words of the curse preceding, and it is no surprise to observe that those key words reappear now in inverted order:

Shimei's curse	השיב יהוה	(verse 8a)
	בן	(8a)
	הנה	(8b)
David's reply	הנה	(11a)
	בן	(11a)
	השיב יהוה	(12b)

Shimei begins by invoking Yahweh's name to condemn David; David concludes by invoking Yahweh's name to neutralize

Shimei's curse!

2 Sam. 19:10-44

Between the conclusion of the revolt of Absalom (2 Sam. 19:9) and the revolt of Shimei (2 Sam. 20:1ff.) is a further unit organized in a symmetrical pattern:[1]

A. Israel intends to be first to bring the king home (verses 10-11).

ועתה למה אתם מחרשים להשיב את־המלך

B. David coaxes Israel to be first (verses 12-15).

C. Judah goes to Gilgal to meet David (verse 16).

ויהודה בא הגלגלה ללכת לקראת המלך
להעביר את־המלך את־הירדן

D. David encounters Shimei, Meribaal and Barzillai at the ford (verses 17-40).

C'. David crosses over to Gilgal, accompanied by Judah (verse 41)

ויעבר המלך הגלגלה וכמהן עבד עמו
וכל־העם יהודה עברים[2] את־המלך

B'. Israel wonders why Judah had stolen David away (verses 42-43).

A'. Israel claims that she spoke first to bring the king home (verse 44).

ולא־היה דברי ראשון לי להשיב את־מלכי

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[1]We would not claim that the term chiasmus applies, as there is a large section in the center of the passage (verses 17-40) which does not break down into complementary halves.

[2]Reading עברים with LXX; neither the Qere or the Ketib of MT fits well.

XUM

The section opens as Israel realizes that she should attempt to regain favor with David now that the revolt under Absalom has failed. The men of Israel conclude:

למה אתם מחרשים להשיב את־המלך (2 Sam. 19:11)

The northern tribes refer back to these words as they quarrel with Judah at the very close of the section:[1]

ולא־היה דבר־י ראשון לי להשיב את־מלכי (2 Sam. 19:44)

At C and C' are two references to Gilgal and to the Judahites there.[2] The first (verse 16) indicates that Judah has gathered at that location to escort the king home, while at the second (verse 41) David crosses the Jordan and goes toward Gilgal.[3]

These travel notices ring the center of the passage, which is devoted to David's interviews with Shimei, Meribaal and Barzillai just before he fords the Jordan. We have met all of these individuals on David's flight from the city. Our narrator places these three episodes here as a conven-

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[1]Hans W. Hertzberg, I and II Samuel, trans. J. S. Bowden (Philadelphia, 1964), p. 368 is therefore in error in suggesting that verses 41ff. belong with the chapter following.

[2]We omit the phrase "and also half the people of Israel" in verse 41 as out of context, with Caird, op. cit., p. 1149. The whole point is that Judah gets to the king first.

[3]We adopt the view of Smith, op. cit., p. 366 and Budde, op. cit., p. 294 that the actual crossing of the Jordan does not take place until verse 41.

XUM

ient way of concluding the accounts of these three men's relations with David.[1] The grouping together of these episodes could well be more of a literary device than an actual historical occurrence.[2]

Less immediately obvious is the relation of elements B and B', but close analysis shows that these parts convey the essence of the whole section: David is concerned to restore harmony to his kingdom, but he also wants to retain Judah in the prominent position. The narrator first indicates that Israel is pondering some appropriate action to win back David's favor (A). David learns of this and quickly sends a message to the Judahites. David builds his message on the very idea which the Israelites have just expressed, namely, that the group which escorts the monarch home will be in an advantageous position with him.[3] David specifically appeals to the Judahites as his kinsmen:

אחי אתם עצמי ובשרי אתם (2 Sam. 19:13)

The men of Judah respond favorably to David's message and gather at Gilgal to escort the king as he crosses the Jordan (verse 16).

When Israel sees that Judah has had the honor of helping David ford the Jordan, she realizes that she has

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[1]Note also the mention of Ziba in verses 18-19.

[2]So also Hertzberg, op. cit., p. 364.

[3]Similarly Smith, op. cit., p. 367.

lost a diplomatic advantage. She accuses Judah of having stolen David away from her. Judah responds that she has done nothing wrong, and that anyway she is kinsman of the king (כי־קרוב המלך אלי -verse 43),[1] exactly the argument which David employed above to convince Judah to escort him back!

We see then that the section has remarkable structure and that it concerns itself throughout with the rift between Israel and Judah at Gilgal.[2] To this conflict is contrasted the harmony which David achieved with Shimei, Meribaal and Barzillai.

2 Sam. 11:1-12:31

The story of David and Bathsheba is also organized as a chiasm:

A. David sends Joab and all Israel against Rabbah; David remains in Jerusalem (11:1).

B. David has intercourse with Bathsheba, and she becomes pregnant (11:2-5).

C. Uriah is killed at David's will (11:6-17).

D. The message comes to David; he replies אל־ירע בעינין את־הדבר הזה (11:18-25).

E. David takes Uriah's wife as his own, and she bears a son (11:26-27a).

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[1]For the phrase כי קרוב אלי, cf. Lev. 21:2-3; 25:25; Num. 27:11.

[2]For the past history of this conflict between Israel and Judah at Gilgal, see de Vaux, Les livres de Samuel, p. 225, n. c; and Hertzberg, op. cit., p. 368.

D'. וירע הדבר אשר־עשה דוד בעיני יהוה
Yahweh sends a message by Nathan (11:27b-12:15a).

C'. The son dies; it is Yahweh's will (11:15b-23).

B'. David has intercourse with Bathsheba; she becomes pregnant and bears a son (12:24-25).

A'. Joab takes part of Rabbah. He sends for David to come take the city. David and all the army then return to Jerusalem (12:26-31).

At the beginning of chapter 11, Joab and the soldiers march off to besiege Rabbah, leaving David behind in Jerusalem. At the end of chapter 12 the troops capture the capital of Ammon. David takes booty from the city and then he and the army return to Jerusalem (12:26-31). The successful conclusion of the campaign and the return of the soldiers to their starting location signals the termination of the pericope.[1]

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[1]Rost, Thronnachfolge, pp. 184-89 has argued that we have in 2 Sam. 10:6-11:1 and 12:26-31 a complete account of the Ammonite war, taken up by our author and employed, without alteration, to frame his story of David and Bathsheba. Rost believed that the two stories were originally independent, and their joining artificial. The Ammonite war did not, for him, belong historically with the personal episode it now frames.

Modification of Rost's view is necessary on several grounds. We have already argued that 2 Sam. 10:15-19a is not part of the Ammonite war. Moreover, the historical connection of the Ammonite war with the story of David and Bathsheba can no longer be denied. A siege fills the background for the events in Jerusalem (11:7, 11, 14-15); why not the siege of the Ammonite capital? Yigael Yadin, "Some Aspects of the Strategy of Ahab and David (I Kings 20; II Sam. 11)," Bib., XXXVI (1955), pp. 332-351 argues persuasively that בסכות in 2 Sam. 11:11 should be read "in Succoth" and not "in booths", and reasons that Succoth served as a base camp for the siege of Rabbah. Finally, it is evident that 2 Sam. 11:1 belongs with the verses fol-

Contained within this framing narrative[1] of the second campaign against Rabbah is the story of David's cohabitation with Bathsheba and is consequences. This narrative also is constructed so as to return at its close to the theme with which it began. That is, at both beginning and end David has intercourse with Bathsheba and she becomes pregnant. Moreover, only at these two points of the story (11:3 and 12:24) is Bathsheba given her proper name; for the rest she is simply termed "the wife of Uriah".

The preceding elements of our proposed chiastic structure (A and A'; B and B') are easily established. But as we move toward the center of the chiasm, analysis becomes more subtle. We need, therefore, to consider in detail the procedure by which we arrived at our outline of

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lowing. In this verse the departure of Joab and his troops on the second campaign is described, and this is the datum which makes possible David's cohabitation with the wife of Uriah. As Budde, op. cit., p. 250 has pointed out, without 11:1 the account of David and Bathsheba is incomplete; the story cannot begin at 11:2, for then the context in which the events in Jerusalem take place is lost.

The background siege of Rabbah is not incompatible with the story of David and Bathsheba; on the contrary, the campaign situation is integral to the plot, and only for that reason is Uriah absent from his home, making possible David's rendezvous with his wife.

[1]Gunkel, Genesis, pp. LIIff. and 200ff. employed the term Rahmenerzählung in his study of the narratives in Genesis. Carlson, David, the Chosen King, p. 144 applies the term to 2 Sam. 10-12. Mia Gerhardt discusses the same technique in "La Technique du Récit à Cadre dan les 1001 Nuits," Arabica, VIII (1961), pp. 137-57 and in The Art of Story Telling (Leiden, 1963), pp. 375ff.

the remainder of chapters 11 and 12.

The most striking feature in the remainder of the story is the repetition of a motif at 11:25 and 11:27b. In the first case the words are David's, as he attempts to gloss over what has transpired:

אל־ירע בעיניך את־הדבר הזה (2 Sam. 11:25)

In the second occurrence the narrator informs us, au contraire:

וירע הדבר אשר־עשה־דוד בעיני יהוה (2 Sam. 11:27b)

Looking more closely, we see that this remarkable contrast of human and divine reaction to the events which have taken place marks the turning point of the story. David's attempt here to make light of the death of his soldiers in battle is the last in a series of foolish acts on his part - his rash act of adultery, his futile attempts to get Uriah to cohabit with his wife to cover the misdeed, his returning of the loyal soldier to battle with his own death warrant, and now finally his dismissing as unimportant the death in battle of troops who were placed in a dangerous position by Joab at David's command.

The second appearance of the motif is equally noteworthy, as from this point forward Yahweh intervenes, sending Nathan to make clear to David his crime, and then striking the child born to Bathsheba of her union with David. Indeed, it may be said that Yahweh dominates the account

from 11:27b on; it is his adverse judgement of David through the prophet Nathan which leads to the death of his son and only then to the approval of the second son born to Bathsheba.[1] While the dramatic climax of the story comes when David confesses his crimes (12:13), the narrative may also be said to be constructed in two symmetrical parts, the first half consisting of David's unopposed actions and the second half of Yahweh's reaction to and punishment of those actions.[2]

At the apex of the chiasm (11:26-27a) is briefly related, entirely in narrative, David's taking of Bathsheba as his wife and the birth to her of his son. This is the fruition of both the adultery and the removal of Bathsheba's husband. At this point in the story, David's folly has run its full course. Indeed, the story could plausibly end here; Uriah has been eliminated and a son has been born to David's new wife. But there is more to come!

Having gone this far, we can now tentatively fill in the remainder of the structure on the basis of parallel episodic units. The protracted description which leads

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[1]Budde, op. cit., p. 254 recognizes that 11:27b belongs with the verses following, contrary to the present arrangement of the MT.

[2]Adar, op. cit., p. 13 demonstrates a similar compositional pattern for the Abimelech story (Judges 9). Abimelech's rise to rulership is reached at verse 22; the second half traces his decline, beginning with divine intervention: "And God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem" (verse 23).

finally to the death of Uriah (C - 11:6-17) has as its counterpart the lengthy description of the sickness and death of David's son (C' - 12:15b-23). The two sections, of approximately the same length, are complementary in that the second death atones for the first.

This leaves two sections, in both of which David is given a message. The first (11:18-25) reports the death of Uriah in battle. The second (11:27b-12:15a) is Yahweh's judgement of David, brought to him by his agent Nathan. Further close analysis suggests some striking parallels between these episodes.

Following the death of Uriah in battle, Joab instructs his messenger in very detailed manner as to how he is to convey the information to David (following here the fuller account preserved in the LXX).[1] Joab stresses that the messenger should inform David that Uriah is dead only after the king becomes angry over the report that men of his were killed fighting near the city wall. Joab foretells exactly how David will react to the report of the casualities, and even the very words with which he will respond on receiving the information. All takes place as

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[1] MT is awkward, and we read with the LXX after verse 22. With this alteration, the כי beginning the messenger's speech is verse 23 is rendered "because" and the speech which follows responds to David's furious question. So Driver, op. cit., pp. 290-91. It is not until verse 24b that the messenger resolves the tension by giving the information that David wants to hear, that Uriah the Hittite died also.

Joab suggested. David demands an explanation from the messenger, he makes a statement, and then concludes with the words "Your servant Uriah the Hittite is also dead" (2 Sam. 11:24). David's change of humor is immediate and total:

> David said to the messenger, "Say this to Joab: ' Do not let this matter trouble you, for the sword devours now one and now another...'" (2 Sam. 11:25)

By juxtaposing David's agitation when he learns of the tactical mistake to his serenity when he is informed that Uriah also died there, the author has pointed an accusing finger at the king; this poignant scene was fashioned to force the listener to realize David's guilt in the matter. The narrator has Joab foretell the very words with which David will respond to the battle report so as to focus the audience's attention upon David's subsequent change of humor on learning that his rival also died in the action.

David dismisses the matter lightly, but Yahweh does not. He sends Nathan to David with a hypothetical judicial problem;[1] David judges the rich man who took the poor man's ewe, and then Nathan declares that the judgement pertains to himself.[2]

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[1]For a discussion of the genre "judicial parable", see Uriel Simon, "The Poor Man's Ewe-Lamb: An Example of a Juridical Parable," Bib., XLVIII (1967), pp. 207-42.

[2]Rost, Thronnachfolge, p. 204; Whybray, op. cit., p. 8 and Gerhard von Rad, "The Beginnings of Historical Writing in Ancient Israel" in The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays, trans. E. W. Trueman Dicken (New York,

Thus we see that in both of these episodes (D and D') a seemingly oblique statement by the messenger invokes the self-righteous anger of David, but this in itself implicates the king in his own outrageous crimes. This same technique of bringing the king to pronounce against himself is employed by the wise woman in chapter 14.[1] The process of self-incrimination begins with the message from Joab (11:18-25):

> ...the dialogue between David and Joab's messengers (sic) serves as a prelude to the sentence of death passed by David upon himself in the pericope of Nathan which follows.[2]

David shrugs off any personal involvement in the death of his soldiers, but has to admit his crimes of adultery and murder before Nathan: "I have sinned against the Lord" (12:13).

This leaves for consideration elements C and C', the account leading to the death of Uriah and the description of the death of David's son. While the parallels here are not as immediately obvious as the foregoing, they can be said to function in parallel within the symmetrical structure.

1966), p. 179 all assert that there are three judgement pronouncements by Nathan (7b-10; 11-12; 13b-14) and that of these the third is the most likely as original. While there may be some secondary additions, particularly in verses 9-12, the question does not affect our structural analysis.

[1]Cf. also 1 Kings 20:35-43.

[2]Carlson, David, the Chosen King, pp. 150-51.

The encounter of David with Uriah is essentially a study of David's character. The focus of our attention throughout is on David, as he schemes to make it appear that Uriah is the true father of his child, and then when that effort fails arranges to have Uriah killed in battle. Uriah is essential for the plot, but he also functions as a foil to David, a contrast to the monarch's personality. Where David gives in to his emotions and then attempts to conceal what he has done, Uriah is a model of stability, quite willing to forego relations with his wife during war. David the sacral king commits adultery; Uriah abides by the rules of sacred warfare and refuses to visit his wife, even though the king has commanded it. This contrast is brought out most pointedly in Uriah's speech, deliberately constructed by our narrator to distinguish Uriah's position vis-à-vis David's:

> The ark and Israel and Judah are encamped at Succoth, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the battlefield, and I, I should go to my house, to eat, to drink, and to lie with my wife? By the life of Yahweh, and by your life, if I should do such a thing! (2 Sam. 11:11)[1]

So too, in the equivalent section of chapter 12 we are again given the opportunity to observe David, this time in his reaction to the sickness and death of his son. The man who was willing to do anything to remove Uriah is now

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[1]Reading "at Succoth" with Yadin (see above, p. 64, n. 1) and "by the life of Yahweh" with most modern commentators.

faced with a situation in which he is powerless to manipulate events. Again the narrative moves slowly, as it describes David fasting and grieving and finally culminates in his explanatory statement of his actions (verses 22-23).

Adultery with Bathsheba leads David to eliminate Uriah (C). David's adultery is punishable by death, but Yahweh spares David and the son dies in his place. Both Uriah and the son die as a direct result of David's adultery. Our narrator stresses the reason for the death of the child by informing us that "the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David" (2 Sam. 12:15b), despite the fact that he has already informed us that Bathsheba is now David's wife (ותהי־לו לאשה -11:27)! In the first instance (C') David plots in desperation; in the second (C') he is displayed as a penitent believer: "Who knows, the Lord may be gracious to me, and let the child live?" (2 Sam. 12:22)

As in the account of the rape of Tamar, the chiasm is built on contrasting pairs. Bathsheba's first pregnancy leads to trickery, deceit and the death of Uriah and the child; her second pregnancy wins the favor of Yahweh, and she bears Solomon, the future monarch. The first intercourse is destructive; the second is productive and redemptive! David accomplished his desire, the elimination of Uriah. But then his son falls sick and he also dies. David concludes his active role in the story with the words "Let not this matter trouble you" (11:25), to which is deliber-

ately juxtaposed Yahweh's reaction: "But the thing which David did troubled Yahweh" (11:27).

The major turning point of the narrative occurs at the birth of the first son (11:26-27a). To this point we witness David's frantic attempts to cover his adultery, first by luring Uriah to his home, then by getting him drunk, and finally by sending him back to be killed at the siege of Rabbah. Following the birth of the son, the narrative reverses this trend. Now Yahweh intervenes, and now he rather than David is in control of events. What David dismissed lightly troubled Yahweh, and he strikes the son in retribution. The son becomes sick and David, who used every power at his disposal to rid himself of Uriah, is reduced to praying for Yahweh's grace. The death of the unnamed son atones for the crime of David, and grace comes to David's life. He goes a second time to Bathsheba, a second son is born, and "Yahweh loved him" (12:24).[1]

Finally we should take note of two small units in which key words have been placed so as to form a chiasm. In the first of these the apex of the chiasm does not carry any particular force, and this example must be regarded as an exception to our general rule that the center of the chiasm is normally the most important part of the structure.

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[1]Carlson, David, the Chosen King, pp. 190-93 discusses certain thematic parallels between 2 Sam. 10-12 and KRT.

2 Sam. 15:30

A	ודוד עלה במעלה הזיתים עלה ובוכה
B	וראש לו חפוי
C	והוא הלך יחף
B'	וכל־העם אשר־אתו חפו איש ראשו
A'	ועלו עלה ובכה

2 Sam. 11:20-21

A	מדוע נגשתם אל־העיר להלחם
B	הלוא ידעתם את אשר־ירו מעל החומה
C	מי־הכה את־אבימלך בן־ירבעל[1]
B'	הלוא־אשה השליכה עליו פלח רכב
	מעל החומה וימת בתבץ
A'	למה נגשתם אל־החומה

4. Repetition as a Means of Linking Successive Episodes Together

Thus far we have considered those repetitions which function <u>within</u> a given narrative unit, either repetitions structured as an inclusio, in which they are placed at the beginning and again at the close of the unit, or repetitions structured as a chiasm, in which they appear in concentric positions throughout the entire unit. But repetitions may also appear at identical places in <u>succeeding</u> narrative units, and function to indicate that two or more episodes

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[1]Reading ירבעל with LXX and Judg. 7:1ff. for MT ירבשת.

are related to each other or that they constitute a larger unity within the Succession Narrative. To these instances we now turn. We will first consider epiphora, the repetition of a word or words at the end of two or more successive units of narrative.

1 Kings 2:12-46

Omitting for the moment consideration of the dismissal of the priest Abiathar (verses 26-27), this section of the Succession Narrative tells how it came about that three individuals - Adonijah (verses 13-25), Joab (verses 28-34) and Shimei (verses 36-46) - were all killed by Benaiah the son of Jehoiada at the command of king Solomon. Each of the episodes culminates with a verse which describes an execution by Benaiah. The three verses are constructed with the variations characteristic of the corpus, as we have seen:[1]

(verse 25) וישלח המלך שלמה ביד בניהו בן־יהוידע
ויפגע־בו וימת

(verse 34) ויעל בניהו בן־יהוידע ויפגע־בו
וימתהו ויקבר בביתו במדבר

(verse 46) ויצו המלך את־בניהו בן־יהוידע ויצא
ויפגע־בו וימת

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[1]And compare, within the second of these episodes, וישלח שלמה את־בניהו בן־יהוידע לאמר לך פגע־בו (verse 29) and ויאמר לו המלך עשה כאשר דבר ופגע־בו (verse 31).

Moreover, in all three episodes a speech by Solomon immediately precedes the murder notices, and in this speech the king pronounces a benediction upon himself and refers to his right to his father's throne.[1] In all three speeches the possibility of blood revenge is negated by placing the blame for what has transpired on the victim himself.[2] Adonijah is to die because his asking for Abishag is tantamount to asking for the throne (verses 22-24), Joab deserves to die for his reckless slaying of Abner and Amasa (verses 32-33), and Shimei must die for violating his agreement with Solomon to remain at his home in Jerusalem (verses 42-45).

But what of verses 26-27 and 35, which spoil this suggested pattern of conclusion for the episodes? It can be said that these three verses intrude on the rhythm of our reconstructed narrative unit, and are to be attributed to a later redaction. The dismissal of Abiathar actually interrupts the flow of the narrative. The following episode opens with "the news" (הַשְּׁמוּעָה) received by Joab, and this causes him to flee to the tent of the Lord and insist that he will <u>die</u> there. This obviously refers back to the story

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[1]Reuven Yaron, "A ramessid parallel to 1 K ii 33, 44-45," VT, VIII (1958), pp. 432-33 regards the pattern of curse and self-benediction in the last two episodes as a fixed formula paralleled in the Egyptian Judicial Papyrus of Turin.

[2]Cf. further Koch, "Der Spruch 'Sein Blut bleibe auf seinem Haupt' und die israelitische Auffassung vom vergossenen Blut," VT, XII (1962), pp. 396-416.

of Adonijah's death, and not to Abiathar's dismissal. Furthermore, the story of Abiathar is told much more briefly and undramatically than the other three stories. Finally, verse 27b has often been regarded as a product of one of the final redactions of the Deuteronomic History.[1] Similarly, verse 35 also breaks the forward motion of the drama. The information that Benaiah took command after Joab is logically appropriate at the point, but extraneous to the plot.

Omitting these three verses from the text leaves us with three episodes built on the same theme, concluding in the same manner, and unified by a further epiphora at verses 12 and 46b:

ושלמה ישב על־כסא דוד אביו ותכן מלכתו מאד (1 Kings 2:12)

והממלכה נכונה ביד־שלמה (46b)

2 Sam. 14:13-20

Two of the addresses of the wise woman of Tekoa signal their conclusion with epiphora. The first, extending from verse 13, concludes with the words:

כי כמלאך האלהים כן אדני המלך (2 Sam. 14:17b)
לשמע הטוב והרע ויהוה אלהיך יהי עמך

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[1]So for example J Mauchline, "I and II Kings," in Peake's Commentary on the Bible, ed. M. Black and H. H. Rowley (London, 1962), p. 340 and John Gray, I and II Kings (Philadelphia, 1963), p. 106. Cf. also von Rad, Studies in Deuteronomy (London, 1963), pp. 74-91.

David then asks her if Joab is responsible for her actions and she admits this, concluding her reply again with praise of David's great wisdom:

ואדני חכם כחכמת מלאך האלהים (2 Sam. 14:20b)
לדעת את־כל־אשר בארץ

2 Sam. 20:4-13

Epiphora is employed again to organize three successive episodes within the larger story of the revolt of Sheba (2 Sam. 20:1-22). All three relate to the officer Amasa and how Joab took the leadership of David's troops away from him.

The first incident (verses 4-7) begins with David ordering Amasa to muster the men of Judah within three days. Amasa is tardy and David then sends out Abishai with David's personal troops instead. The second episode (verses 8-10) takes place at the great stone at Gibeon. Joab meets Amasa there and smites him with his sword. The final vignette (verses 11-13) details the death of Amasa and the decision of the people to follow Joab.

All three episodes conclude in identical manner:

ויצאו אחרי אבישי[1] יואב והכרתי (2 Sam. 20:7)
והפלתי וכל־הגבורים ויצאו מירושלם
לרדף אחרי שבע בן־בכרי

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[1]Emending אחריו אנשי (verse 7) to אחרי אבישי with Driver, Notes on...Samuel, p. 342; de Vaux, Les livres de Samuel, p. 227; Smith, op. cit., p. 369 and others.

וַיִּרְדֹּף אַחֲרֵי שֶׁבַע בֶּן־בִּכְרִי (verse 10b)

עָבַר כָּל־אִישׁ אַחֲרֵי יוֹאָב לִרְדֹּף אַחֲרֵי שֶׁבַע בֶּן־בִּכְרִי (verse 13b)

2 Sam. 10:1, 13:1, and 15:1

Anaphora, the repetition of a word or words at the beginning of two or more successive narrative units is also utilized in the Succession Narrative. The most striking example of this is the phrase וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי־כֵן at 2 Sam. 10:1 and 13:1 and its variation וַיְהִי מֵאַחֲרֵי כֵן at 15:1. The phrases mark off three major divisions in the corpus, that is, the story of David and Bathsheba set in the context of the Ammonite campaigns (chapters 10-12), the story of Amnon and Absalom (chapters 13-14) and the story of Absalom's revolt (chapter 15ff.).[1]

2 Sam. 15:13-16:14

The account of the flight of David from Jerusalem is a structured unit of the Succession Narrative which has been built up of smaller episodes and organized about a repeated pattern.[2] There are seven scenes in this section, each depicting an encounter of David with a particular

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[1]Carlson, David, the Chosen King, p. 41 notes the function of these three phrases to distinguish sections of the story, but attributes their origin to the organizational work of the Deuteronomists.

[2]Gressmann, op. cit., p. 176 speaks here of "eine Reihe künsterisch angeordneter Augensblickbilder."

individual, and these seven scenes are linked together by seven transitional units, all of which describe positions on David's flight from the city.[1] The pattern which results consists of: 1) narrative indicating David's location (15:16-18; 15:23; 15:30; 15:32a; 16:1; 16:5a; 16:14) followed by 2) appearance of an individual at that location (15:13; 15:19; 15:24; 15:31; 15:32b; 16:1; 16:5b) and 3) an encounter between David and that person (15:13-15; 15:19-22; 15:24-29; 15:31; 15:32b-37; 16:1-4; 16:5b-13). The only variation from this pattern is that the first encounter (15:13-15) is not preceded by an announcement of David's location. But that is given within the scene itself: "And David said to all his servants who were with him in Jerusalem" (2 Sam. 15:14). We should examine the elements of the pattern in greater detail now.

1) Travel Notices: The first three transitional units describing stations of David's journey are all made prominent through the use of repetition. The first notice, which places David at the last house out of the city (15:16-18), repeats both the phrase ויצא המלך וכל ... בר־גליו and the phrase עברים (variants) וכל־העם twice:[2]

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[1]Gunkel, Legends of Genesis, pp. 81-82 discusses how stations of a journey may be used to link together several stories.

[2]Transposing וכל העם in verse 17 with וכל עבדיו in verse 18 and adding ואתי before וכל הגתים in verse 18b, required by the context. See Driver's full discussion, Notes on...Samuel, pp. 312-13.

(2 Sam. 15:16-18) ויצא המלך וכל־ביתו ברגליו
ויעזב המלך את עשר נשים פלגשים לשמר הבית
ויצא המלך וכל־עבדיו ברגליו
ויעמד בית המרחק
וכל־העם עברים על־ידו
וכל־הכרתי וכל־הפלתי ואתי וכל־הגתים...
עברים על־פני המלך

The second notice continues the theme of the first by again repeating the phrase וכל העם עברים.[1] Here David has reached the edge of the Kidrom:

(2 Sam. 15:23) וכל־הארץ בוכים קול גדול
וכל־העם עברים
והמלך עמד[2] בנחל קדרון
וכל־העם עברים על־פניו דרך זית המדבר[3]

With the third travel notice David starts up the Mount of Olives. This notice organizes its repeated phrases into a chiasm, as we have already seen:

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[1]Carlson, David, the Chosen King, p. 171 makes note of the "pivotal character" of verse 23 and its linkage with verse 17 through repetition of the phrase והמלך עמד as well as with verse 30 by use of the root בכה in both places.

[2]Reading עמד for MT עבר as only appropriate in the context, with Hertzberg, op. cit., p. 339; de Vaux, Les livres de Samuel, p. 205; Budde, op. cit., p. 273; Driver, Notes on...Samuel, pp. 314-15; Carlson, David, the Chosen King, p. 171 and others.

[3]Reading על־פניו דרך זית המדבר for the awkward MT על־פני־דרך את־המדבר, with Lucian's recension and verse 30. Cf. Driver, Notes on...Samuel, p. 314.

XUM

(2 Sam. 15:30) ודוד עלה במעלה הזיתים עלה ובוכה
וראש לו חפוי
והוא הלך יחף
וכל־העם אשר־אתו חפו איש ראשו
ועלו עלה ובכה

The remaining four stations are more briefly indicated. The fourth relates that David has reached the top of the hill, while the following locates him slightly beyond the crest:

(2 Sam. 15:32a) ויהי דוד בא עד־הראש אשר ישתחוה שם לאלהים
(16:1) ודוד עבר מעט מהראש

The sixth indicates his arrival at Bahurim:

(2 Sam. 16:5a) ובא המלך דוד עד־בחרים

With the seventh and final notice David reaches his destination and rests there:[1]

(2 Sam. 16:14) ויבא המלך וכל־העם אשר־אתו עיפים וינפש שם

2) Introduction of the individual: Each statement as to David's location is immediately followed by arrival of an individual who meets with David (with the exception of 16:14 with which the section is concluded). Four of these entrances are signaled by הנה :

(2 Sam. 15:24) והנה גם־צדוק וכל־הלוים

[1] It is possible that a place name has dropped out of 16:14. Lucian's recension supplies παρὰ τὸν Ἰορδάνην .

והנה לקראתו חושי הארכי (2 Sam. 15:32b)

והנה ציבא נער מפיבשת לקראתו (16:1)

והנה משם איש יוצא ממשפחת בית־שאול ושמו שמעי (16:5)

Of the three other individuals who meet David, Ittai has already been mentioned within the preceding travel notice (15:18) and needs no further introduction prior to David's address to him. The other two notices briefly announce the arrival of a message:

ויבא המגיד אל־דוד לאמר (2 Sam. 15:13)

ולדוד הגד[1] לאמר (15:31)

Following the announcement of the individual who will meet David, we are then typically informed as to the circumstances of his arrival. Ittai is leading six hundred Gittites, Zadok comes with Abiathar and the Levites bearing the ark, Hushai has rent his garments and poured dirt on his head, Ziba comes with supplies on two donkeys, and Shimei hurls stones in David's direction and curses him.

3) The interview: Here too a regular pattern of composition emerges. Each encounter concerns either a new crisis for David or an offer of help. In every case David makes a judgement of the situation, and in so doing displays great skill in handling the diverse problems facing him. Our author appears to have developed these scenes to reveal

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[1]Reading ולדוד הגד with LXX for MT ודוד הגיד.

aspects of David's ability as a leader: 1) A messenger brings word that Absalom is in revolt; David concludes that he must flee the city (15:13-15). 2) David offers Ittai the foreign mercenary freedom from service under these circumstances, but he refuses to leave the king (19-22). 3) David orders Zadok to take the ark back to Jerusalem and arranges for Ahimaaz and Jonathan to bring him reports from there (24-29). 4) In response to the news that Ahitophel has joined the conspiracy, David prays that Yahweh might confound Ahitophel's advice (31). 5) David meets Hushai and sends him back to counteract Ahitophel (32b-37). 6) Ziba comes with supplies for the fugitives; in gratitude David deeds him the land which he formerly gave to Meribaal (16:1-4). 7) Shimei curses David and Abishai offers to kill the offender, but David restrains him, trusting to Yahweh's judgement of the events taking place (5b-14).

The conclusion of the series of encounters is stressed by changes in the composition. The arrival of Shimei receives more attention than any of the preceding individuals:

והנה משם איש יוצא ממשפחת בית שאול (2 Sam. 16:5b)
ושמו שמעי בן־גרא

The climactic nature of this seventh and final episode, in which David's fortunes reach their nadir, is obvious. The chiastic organization of the episode is an indication of its importance for the author. Moreover, the seventh travel

notice has the character of finality, relating that David arrives at a resting place and that he "caught his breath there";[1]

ויבא המלך וכל־העם אשר־אתו עיפים וינפש שם (2 Sam. 16:14)

In the light of the repeated features, we may conclude that while the events of this section obviously have an historical basis, their recitation occurs within a stylized framework.

2 Sam. 18:19-19:9

A further example of epiphora is the repetition of a phrase at 2 Sam. 18:17 and again at 19:9. The first use follows the narrative describing Absalom's burial, and marks the conclusion of the story of his unsuccessful revolt:

ויקחו את־אבשלום וישליכו אתו ביער (2 Sam. 18:17)
אל־הפתח הגדול ויצבו עליו גל־אבנים
גדול מאד וכל־ישראל נסו איש לאהליו[2]

The second appearance of the phrase follows the account of the bringing of the news of Absalom's death to David, his grief on receiving that news and subsequent recovery of composure at Joab's insistence (18:18-19:9):[3]

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[1]It appears likely that the number seven was considered important by the author of this section of narrative. The same technique is employed extensively in the Ugaritic texts KRT and AQHT.

[2]Reading the Qere לאהליו .

[3]2 Sam. 18:18 is an archeological comment concerning

(2 Sam. 19:9) ויקם המלך וישב בשער ולכל־העם הגידו לאמר
הנה המלך יושב בשער ויבא כל־העם לפני המלך
וישראל נס איש לאהליו

The narrative unit remaining between the two phrases in question (2 Sam. 18:19-19:9) deals throughout with consideration of David and his love for his son. The story preceding (18:1-17) describes the battle and Absalom's death; the following section (19:10-44) introduces a rift between the northern and southern tribes, and has its own symmetrical organization.

The section 2 Sam. 18:19-19:9, like 2 Sam. 15:13-16:14, employs notices of David's location as an aid in progressing from one episode to the next. The key word utilized here is השער . Not only the repetition of this key word but also its placement suggests that our author is using a deliberate compositional technique. When the scene shifts from the battlefield, we are first informed as to his location:

(2 Sam. 18:24) ודוד יושב בין־שני השערים

Then, when he has finally learned that Absalom has been killed, David goes up to a room above the gate, and is not at the entrance to greet his returning troops:

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a monument attributed to Absalom. A redactor considered the information important and inserted it at the conclusion of the story of Absalom's life. This explains its incompatibility with 2 Sam. 14:27, where Absalom's children are listed.

וידבז המלך ויעל על־עלית השער (2 Sam. 19:1)

But Joab learns of this, lectures David on proper behavior at this time, and convinces David to return to the entrance to the city:

ויקם המלך וישב בשער ולכל־העם הגידו לאמר (2 Sam. 19:9)
הנה המלך יושב בשער

This is exactly where his troops left him when they marched out to battle:

ויעמד המלך אל־יד השער (2 Sam. 18:4)

Note also the double repetition of המלך יושב בשער at 19:9, a further indication of the conclusion of the section. The same technique is utilized in the double notice of Absalom's flight to Geshur (2 Sam. 13:37 and 38).

2 Sam. 14:24-28

Anadiplosis is the repetition at the opening of a paragraph of a prominent word or words from the close of the preceding paragraph, and usually with a change or extension of meaning. At 2 Sam. 14:24b and 28b we may claim an instance of anadiplosis, although the term is not strictly applicable because there are three verses intervening (14:25-27). The repetition here serves to bring the listener back to the point at which he left the story:

ויסב אבשלום אל־ביתו ופני המלך לא ראה (14:24b)

וישב אבשלום בירושלם שנתים ימים (14:28)
ופני המלך לא ראה

Between these repetitions is an aside describing the beauty of Absalom and his sister Tamar (14:25-27). This itself is marked off from the rest by an inclusio, as we have seen.[1]

That our author organized his narrative on the basis of conscious prose techniques is convincingly demonstrated by the numerous examples of structured repetitions we have identified. The weight of this evidence suggests that prose composition in ancient Israel was not a haphazard or purely spontaneous creative activity, but rather that it proceeded with the aid of established patterns of composition. Having seen this, we should now turn to a consideration of key word repetitions and determine if they too may be regarded as intentional rhetorical devices.

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[1]See above, pp. 36-7.

CHAPTER III

REPETITION AND RHETORICAL PURPOSE

1. Key Words

Thus far we have concerned ourselves with repetitions which play a role in the determination of the structure of a unit or series of units. We have examined instances of chiasm and inclusio, in which repetitions have been placed so as to give order to a single unit, and also the phenomena of anaphora and epiphora, in which the beginnings or endings of successive sections repeat the same words or phrases.

But repetition in Hebrew serves another function, and to this we now turn our attention. We want to attempt an analysis of certain repeated words or phrases which strike us as being of strategic importance for our understanding of the purpose or intended thrust of a particular story. The technique is known as "key word usage", and perhaps its best definition has been given by Buber in his article, "Leitwortstil in der Erzählung des Pentateuchs":

> Unter Leitwort ist ein Wort oder ein Wortstamm zu verstehen, der sich innerhalb eines Textes, einer Textfolge, eines Textzusammenhangs sinnreich wiederholt: wer diesen Wiederholungen folgt, dem erschliesst oder verdeutlicht sich ein Sinn des Textes oder wird auch nur eindringlicher offenbar.[1]

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[1]Martin Buber, Werke II: Schriften zur Bibel (Munich, 1964), p. 1131.

We can appreciate that in an oral culture the repetition of a given word or phrase throughout a story would hammer home the elemental message of that story to the listener. The key word or phrase became impressed upon the listener's mind, and the narrator would thereby have insured that his message was correctly perceived. Muilenburg understands this to be the motivation behind key word usage:

> Repetition plays a diverse role in the Old Testament. It serves, for one thing, to center the thought, to rescue it from disparateness and diffuseness, to focus the richness of varied predication upon the poet's controlling concern....Repetition serves, too, to give continuity to the writer's thought; the repeated word or phrase is often strategically located, thus providing a clue to the movement and stress of the poem.[1]

While key word analysis of a Biblical pericope is open to the criticism of being too subjective, we believe that a judicious use of this methodology in many instances will open for us the central meaning of a passage. In the examples which follow we assert that such analysis reveals strikingly the underlying purpose of the story being considered.[2]

2 Sam. 13:1-22

The account of the rape of Tamar contains 11 repe-

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[1]Muilenburg, "A Study in Hebrew Rhetoric", p. 99.

[2]For a representative listing of scholars who have employed this methodology, see Buber, Werke II, p. 1132, n. 4.

titions of the word "brother" (אח) and eight of the word "sister" (אחות). Some of these repetitions are integral to the progress of the story, and cannot, of themselves, be considered unusual or significant for our exegesis of the passage. For instance, it would be perfectly normal for Tamar and Amnon to address each other as "my brother" and "my sister":[1]

בואי שכבי עמי אחותי (2 Sam. 13:11)

אל־אחי[2] (13:12 and 16)

And Absalom would naturally address Tamar as "my sister":

ועתה אחותי החרישי (2 Sam. 13:20)

Nor may we attach particular importance to the use of these two words in the opening two verses, as here they are necessary to explain the familial relations of the dramatis personae. But having established in these first two verses that Absalom and Amnon are sons of David and that Tamar is Absalom's sister, later references to their kinship must serve some further purpose for the narrator.

In some of these later repetitions the usage of אח and אחות may clearly be said to be redundant for the purpose of identifying characters. Consider the following:

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[1]Absalom and Tamar were full brother and sister, while Amnon was half-brother. Cf. 2 Sam. 3:2-3.

[2]Emending the difficult MT of verse 16 (אל־אודת) to agree with Lucian's recension (μή, ἀδελφε = אל־אחי).

(2 Sam. 13:4b) את־תמר אחות אבשלום אחי אני אהב

(13:5 and 6) תבא נא תמר אחותי

(13:7) לכי נא בית אמנון אחיך

(13:8) ותלך תמר בית אמנון אחיה

(13:10) ותבא לאמנון אחיה החדרה

(13:22) על־דבר אשר ענה את תמר אחתו

In all of these instances the word "brother" or "sister" follows a proper name (Tamar, Amnon or Absalom) and is therefore not necessary for our understanding of the story; the proper name immediately preceding gives us full information on the identity of the character.

Now consider the piling up of these sibling terms in verse 20:

(2 Sam. 13:20) ויאמר אליה אבשלום אחיה
האמינון[1] אחיך היה עמך
ועתה אחותי החרישי אחיך הוא
אל־תשיתי את־לבך לדבר הזה
ותשב תמר ושממה בית אבשלום אחיה

We must ask whether the obvious stress placed on the words את and אחות indicates something of the narrator's understanding of the events he is describing. Let us turn again to the opening verses with this in mind.

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[1]There is no particular reason to omit the yodh of MT האמינון. Driver, Notes on...Samuel, p. 300 suggests that the yodh is used here to form a diminutive of contempt, as in Arabic. Or even better, with Freedman, oral communication, it may indicate the actual pronunciation of the name.

Every one of the persons involved in the story of Tamar's rape is within the immediate family of David; this datum is carefully impressed upon us in the introductory four verses:

ויהי אחרי־כן ולאבשלום בן־דוד אחות יפה ושמה תמר ויאהבה אמנון
בן־דוד ויצר לאמנון להתחלות בעבור תמר אחתו כי בתולה היא
ויפלא בעיני אמנון לעשות לה מאומה ולאמנון רע ושמו יונדב
בן־שמעה אחי־דוד ויונדב איש חכם מאד ויאמר לו
מדוע אתה ככה דל בן־המלך בבקר בבקר הלוא תגוד לי
ויאמר לו אמנון
את־תמר אחות אבשלום אחי אני אהב

Even Amnon's advisor Jonadab is related; he is David's nephew (verse 3)!

The repetitions of "brother" and "sister" impress upon the listener that the story is about a family and how it came about that the relationships of that family collapsed. Amnon's lust for his sister brings about her loss of virginity and a promising future as a beautiful daughter of the king. Amnon's action severs his kinship with Tamar. Before the rape he addresses her as אחותי (verse 11), but afterwards refers to her impersonally as את־זאת (verse 17). Absalom comes to hate his own brother for what he has done, and eventually kills Amnon. In turn Amnon has to flee to Geshur. And finally there is the father David, portrayed as too passive with his sons. He does nothing to discipline Amnon for raping Tamar, even though he is furious when he learns what has happened (cf. LXX of verse 21).

Indeed, our narrator seems to deliberately display David as unwittingly furthering both Amnon's and then Absalom's purposes. He sends Tamar to Amnon (verse 17) and later acquieses to Absalom's demand that Amnon come to his sheep-shearing festival (verse 27).

The close kinship of the characters, and especially of Amnon, Tamar and Absalom is conveyed forcefully to the audience by the copious repetition of the terms "brother" and "sister". Through this simple compositional device the rending apart of the royal family is communicated to us in a most convincing manner.[1]

2 Sam. 12:15b-23

Another episode where analysis of repetition suggests to us the central point is in the account of the sickness and death of the son born of David to Bathsheba. We must concern ourselves here with the two related phrases הילד חי and מת הילד and their variations. The first phrase appears four times in this episode, and the second eight times, including two occasions where it is shortened to simply the word מת (verses 19 and 23).

The passage as a whole is neatly structured about two sections totally in narrative (verses 15-17 and verse 20) which alternate with two sections in which David con-

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[1]One can compare the similar use of the key word אח in the story of Cain and Abel, Gen. 4:1-16.

verses with his servants (verses 18-19 and verses 21-23). The narrative sections are built so as to parallel each other. In both we are informed as to David's actions, in the first case on learning that his son has become sick, and in the second when he has been informed of his death. In both David prays to his God (verses 16 and 20). In the first (verses 15-17) David proclaims a fast and lies on the ground. His servants attempt without success to get him to rise from the earth, and David refuses to eat. Conversely, in the second section (verse 20) following the death of his son David ceases his fast, rises from the ground, goes to his home and eats food.

In the two conversational sections all twelve instances of our key phrases appear, and point to the meaning of the whole passage. We present these two sections in the Hebrew, as only in this way can the emphasis intended by our author be fully appreciated:

(2 Sam. 12:18-19) ויהי ביום השביעי וימת הילד

וייראו עבדי דוד להגיד לו כי־מת הילד כי אמרו

הנה בהיות הילד חי דברנו אליו ולא־שמע

בקולנו ואיך נאמר אליו מת הילד ועשה רעה

וירא דוד כי עבדיו מתלחשים

ויבן דוד כי מת הילד ויאמר דוד אל־עבדיו

המת הילד

ויאמרו

מת

ויאמר עבדיו אליו (2 Sam. 12:21-23)

מה־הדבר הזה אשר עשיתה בעוד[1] הילד חי
צמת ותבך וכאשר מת הילד קמת ותאכל לחם
ויאמר
בעוד הילד חי צמתי ואבכה כי אמרתי
מי יודע יחנני[2] יהוה וחי הילד
ועתה מת למה זה אני צם האוכל להשיבו עוד
אני הלך אליו והוא לא־ישוב אלי

The episode deals at the factual level with the sickness and death of David's son. But our author has presented the story, utilizing these key phrases, in such a way that our attention is on David and his revolutionary views on life and death. David breaks with established religious practices by mourning when his son is ill and then resuming his normal activities when his son dies, directly opposite of what his servants expected of him.[3] When they object to David about his reversal of the usual mourning procedure, he responds that life must be his care, and that beyond death he cannot be concerned:

> But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me (2 Sam. 12:23).

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[1]Emending difficult MT בעבור to בעוד , despite LXX but with Lucian's recension and verse 22.

[2]The Ketib is quite acceptable. Cf. Driver, Notes on ...Samuel, p. 293.

[3]For an analysis of this and other passages in which David breaks with the past, and suggestions for a correlation between his new approach to existence and wisdom theology, see Brueggemann, "The Trusted Creature," CBQ, XXXI (1969), pp. 484-98.

XUM

2 Sam. 18:19-31

Following the description of the defeat of Absalom's forces and his own death at the hand of Joab (2 Sam. 18:1-17) is an episode which relates the way in which the report of what has transpired is brought to David, who is waiting expectantly at Mahanaim (cf. 2 Sam. 17:27 and 18:4). Our author has chosen to draw out the account of the bringing of the news for some thirteen verses. This remarkable elaboration of what could have been told quite briefly serves the purpose of creating suspense for the listener and gives him ample time to ponder how David is likely to receive the report of the momentous events of that day. Everywhere in the episode we see that the delay of the conclusion is brought about through the use of repetition, and more specifically, that the events which could be related just once are repeated two or more times.

The narrative is organized about the key word בשר, which appears nine times, five of them in verbal form (verses 19, 20, 20, 26, and 31) and four of them as the noun (verses 20, 22, 25, and 27). Appearing along with בשר until verse 27 is the word רוץ, this no less than twelve times. But this latter word cannot be called a "key word", as it does not meet our criterion that such a word functions in a major way in the interpretation of the passage in which it appears. Rather, רוץ functions to delay the action of the story and

gives a humorous touch to it, as we shall see.[1]

Both words are introduced immediately with Ahimaaz' opening declaration:

אָרוּצָה נָּא וַאֲבַשֶּׂרָה אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ (2 Sam. 18:19)
כִּי־שָׁפְטוֹ יְהוָה מִיַּד אֹיְבָיו

Here we note again the tendency in the Succession Narrative to indicate at the very beginning of an episode the outline of the events to follow. That is, word of the outcome of the battle must be brought to the king, and Ahimaaz volunteers to convey the tidings that Yahweh has rescued David and his kingdom from peril. The remainder of the account details exactly the manner in which the news is delivered and how David receives it.

Now, in Joab's reply to Ahimaaz' request, a polarity in the use of the word בשר is introduced:

לֹא אִישׁ בְּשֹׂרָה אַתָּה הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וּבִשַּׂרְתָּ בְּיוֹם אַחֵר (2 Sam. 18:20)
וְהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לֹא תְבַשֵּׂר כִּי־עַל כֵּן[2] בֶּן־הַמֶּלֶךְ מֵת

There are two ways in which the battle affects David. The good בשרה is that David's forces have been victorious. But there is also the bad בשרה, that David's son has been killed.[3]

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[1]Rost, Thronnachfolge, p. 220 notes the rhetorical use of repetitions of רוץ to convey a breathless atmosphere to this story, but he makes no mention of the more significant word בשר.

[2]Reading כִּי־עַל כֵּן with the Qere and LXX ὅτι ἐπὶ τούτῳ for MT Ketib כִּי עַל.

[3]Buber, Werke II, p. 1136 discusses the "fruchtbare innere Gegensätzlichkeit" which a key word can assume.

In verses 21-23 our author delays the action, and in so doing amuses us with repetitions of the word רוץ . Joab summons the Cushite to carry tidings to David and he leaves:

וישתחו הכושי[1] ליואב וירץ (verse 21b)

Ahimaaz repeats his request:

ויהי מה ארוצה־נא גם־אני אחרי הכושי (verse 22)

And again Joab denies the suggestion:

למה־זה אתה רץ בני ולכה אין־בשרה מצאת[2] (verse 22)

But Ahimaaz insists for yet a third and now successful time:

ויהי־מה ארוץ (verse 23)
ויאמר לו
רוץ
וירץ אחימעץ

Lulled by the seemingly carefree mood of the narrator and the light way in which he has reported Ahimaaz' repeated pleas to be allowed to run as messenger, the listener forgets for the moment the importance of the message for David.[3] But now the scene shifts to the father

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[1] Adding הכושי with verses 22 and 31.

[2] אין בשרה מצאת is unusual, and various scholars suggest pointing מְצָאת . See Driver's discussion, Notes on ...Samuel, p. 331.

[3] The word דבר functions in a similar way to רוץ here in the story of the wise woman before David (2 Sam. 13:39-14:22). Here again our author gives us a playful

who waits for news. The audience sympathizes with the king who hopes that his son has been spared. A conclusion is not to be reached quickly, however, as again our author draws out his description of details and sustains the suspense. First the watchman sees a runner approaching:

וירא והנה־איש רץ לבדו (2 Sam. 18:24)

And David responds to that:

אם־לבדו בשורה בפיו (verse 25)

And then the same scene is repeated, slowing the motion of the story still further:

וירא הצפה איש־אחר רץ (verse 26)
ויקרא הצפה אל־השער[1] ויאמר
הנה־איש רץ לבדו

And again David reacts:

גם־זה מבשר (verse 26b)

And even further, as the messengers draw nearer, the watchman recognizes the running of the foremost:

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interlude between more emotional scenes. The listener cannot help but be amused by the exaggerations to which the woman resorts in attempting to convince the king of the justice of her artificial case. The light mood is conveyed by repetition of דבר some twenty-two times in verses 1-22, eighteen of these after verse 11. The virtuosity of our author is displayed by his extended use of this single word; the nominal form assumes virtually every nuance possible for it to have (speech, word, command, decision, promise, affair, deed, event, plea, etc.).

[1]Again emending the pointing of MT אל־השער to agree with the context and LXX. Read אל־השָׁעַר.

אני ראה את־מרוצת הראשון (verse 27)
כמרצת אחימעץ בן־צדוק

In this his third and climactic response to reports from the watchtower, David concludes that the news he is about to receive will be favorable:

איש־טוב זה ואל־בשורה טובה יבוא (verse 27b)

Twice the watchman has reported sighting a runner, and twice David has responded "He brings news". The third time the watchman reports the running style of the first as that of Ahimaaz, and David responds "He is a good man, and brings good news." Or is it?

Ahimaaz finally arrives and shouts שלום (verse 28). We can imagine how relieved David must be to hear that. Ahimaaz goes on to declare that the battle has been lost by those who opposed the king, but David presses him about his only real concern, that for his son. He begins his question with the very word Ahimaaz just used and the last word he spoke to his son (cf. 2 Sam. 15:9):

שלום[1] לנער לאבשלום (verse 29)

But Ahimaaz cannot bring himself to complete the report, and so he evades the question, claiming that the confusion of battle prevented his knowing about Absalom. Now the Cushite arrives, and the same details of interview are

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[1]Interrogative he is not needed here; see above, p. 28, n. 2.

repeated. The Cushite declares:[1]

יתבשר אדני המלך כי־שפטו יהוה היום (verse 31)
מיד כל־הקמים עליך

But David queries insistently:

השלום לנער לאבשלום (verse 32)

And in the Cushite's response to this question enough is said to inform David at last that his son has been killed:

יהיו כנער איבי אדני המלך (verse 32)
וכל אשר־קמו עליך לרעה

We see then that the entire episode is built on the ironic contrast of good tidings over against bad tidings. The בשורה has been good news for David's forces, for they have been victorious in battle. But for David the בשורה was bad, for his son died. Ahimaaz, the איש־טוב (verse 27) brought what everyone but David would regard as בשורה טובה (verse 27), but David learns also that Absalom was killed in the battle.

2 Sam. 11:6-13

The account of how David meets with Uriah and attempts to get him to cohabit with his wife is organized about a pair of related concepts. One concept is expressed

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[1]Note how similar the words of the Cushite (כי־שפטך יהוה היום מיד כל־הקמים עליך) are to the words with which Ahimaaz opened the episode (כי־שפטו יהוה מיד איביו -verse 19). But the two statements do not form an inclusio, as the true conclusion to the episode comes only at verse 32.

by the key word שכב , and the other by the key phrase לא ירד אוריה אל ביתו and its variations. The word שכב always appears in this episode in conjunction with the other phrase, and is interpreted properly when seen in relation to the latter.[1]

David acts in this episode with the intention of getting Uriah to have intercourse with Bathsheba, in the hope that Uriah's union with her will conceal the fact that David is the real father of the child she is expecting. David's plan is nowhere spelled out, but may be inferred from the story, and confirmed by analysis of our key word and key phrase.

David moves into action at the moment he receives word from Bathsheba that she is pregnant (verse 5). He sends to Joab for Uriah the Hittite, and he comes before David. The king inquires about the progress of the war and the well-being of Joab and the army, thereby diverting Uriah from David's real purpose and making the summons of his officer from the battlefield more plausible. He then commands Uriah:

רד לביתך ורחץ רגליך[2] (verse 8)

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[1]Carlson, David, the Chosen King, p. 148 recognizes the importance of the key word שכב at 2 Sam. 11:2, 4, 11 and 24, but makes no mention of its use at verses 9 and 13, where we feel that its real function in the composition is revealed.

[2]In the context, the expression רחץ רגליך may well be a sexual euphemism. Cf. Judg. 3:24; I Sam. 24:3; 2 Kings 18:27; Isa. 7:20.

The result of this command is given in narrative, and here we have the first pairing of our two key ideas:

(verses 8b-9) ויצא אוריה מבית המלך ותצא אחריו משאת המלך
וישכב אוריה פתח בית המלך את כל־עבדי אדניו
ולא־ירד אל־ביתו

Our author utilizes the key word שכב masterfully here. When the listener reaches the point ויצא אוריה מבית המלך ותצא אחריו משאת המלך וישכב אוריה he anticipates the successful accomplishment of David's plan with the words עם־אשתו or some such, but no, for the narrative goes on to say that Uriah "slept at the door of the king's house, with all the servants of his lord." Our author cleverly introduces an ironic tension into the story with these verses. For David to conceal his intercourse with Bathsheba, Uriah must go to his home (רד לביתך -verse 8) and lie (שכב) with his wife; but Uriah does not go to his home, and he lies (וישכב -verse 9) with the servants of his lord rather than with Bathsheba![1]

So the report comes to David:

(verse 10) לא־ירד אוריה אל־ביתו

He demands of Uriah:

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[1]For this analysis I am indebted to the article of Menakhem Perry and Meir Sternberg, "The King through Ironic Eyes: The Narrator's Devices in the Biblical Story of David and Bathsheba and Two Excursuses on the Theory of the Narrative Text," (Hebrew) in Hasifrut I, no. 2 (1968), pp. 263-292 and especially p. 271.

הלוא מדרך אתה בא מדוע לא־ירדת אל־ביתך (verse 10b)

In Uriah's reply the irony of the situation is clearly stated:

(verse 11) הארון וישראל ויהודה ישבים בסכות ואדני
יואב ועבדי אדני על־פני השדה חנים ואני
אבוא אל־ביתי לאכל ולשתות ולשכב עם־אשתי
חי יהוה[1] וחי נפשך אם־אעשה את־הדבר הזה

Uriah's speech draws a sharp contrast between his actions and those of David. The king has ordered him to go to his home, but he has not done that and here gives his reason. The rest of Israel is engaged in war, and he will abide by the canons of holy warfare and abstain from intercourse with his wife. To his noble position David's action with Bathsheba stands out in ironic contrast. David lay with another man's wife while his valiant troops were in the battlefield; Uriah will not even lie with his own wife because of his adherence to the rules of sacred warfare! Uriah knows full well what will happen if he goes to his home:

ואני אבוא אל־ביתי לאכל ולשתות ולשכב אם־אשתי (verse 11b)

For precisely this reason he has slept instead at the gate of the royal residence. Uriah concludes his speech with the words חי יהוה[1] וחי נפשך אם־אעשה את־הדבר הזה (11:11).

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[1]Reading חי יהוה וחי נפשך for MT חיך וחי נפשך. Cf. Driver, Notes on...Samuel, p. 290.

Uriah swears an oath of abstinence by invoking the name of Yahweh and the name of the king. And yet the very person whose name he has invoked has not abstained; David has done "such a thing" (את־הדבר הזה) and more!

David cannot give up trying, and so he detains Uriah in Jerusalem for another day, and again we go through the same procedures, described more briefly this time (verses 12-13). Uriah has just suggested in his speech (verse 11) that if he were to go to his home, he would eat (לאכל) and drink (ולשתות) and lie with his wife. So too now he feasts with David (ויקרא־לו דוד ויאכל לפניו וישת) and even becomes drunk. Then he leaves to sleep (ויצא בערב לשכב) - and even on his own couch (במשכבו) but again not with his wife (עם־עבדי אדניו ואל־ביתו לא ירד). The contrast of David's folly with Uriah's self-denial could not be expressed more effectively. Uriah went out drunk in the evening (בערב) and lay on his couch (לשכב במשכבו) while it was David who rose up from his couch in the evening (ויהי לעת הערב ויקם דוד מעל משכבו -11:2), saw Bathsheba, and gave in to his desire! Uriah will not do while drunk what David did while sober, and so the king sends him back to the battlefield with his own death warrant.

We see then how skillfully the episode of Uriah has been fashioned about the key word שכב and the key phrase לא ירד אוריה אל־ביתו, and how our author utilized the two to bind the story, carry the action forward, and depict a

polarity of personal motive in the two characters.

2. Repetition and Emphasis

The iteration of a word or words in a particular context obviously gives more stress to the expression being repeated than would be conveyed without such repetition. It is not surprising to observe, therefore, that the same word may be repeated several times at moments of great emotion in the Succession Narrative.

When Hushai the Archite meets Absalom in Jerusalem he shouts יחי המלך יחי המלך (2 Sam. 16:16).[1] So too the wise woman attracts Joab's attention by calling out שמעו שמעו (2 Sam. 20:16). And Joab in turn begins his response with the emphatic denial חלילה חלילה לי (2 Sam. 20:20).[2]

David's outpouring of grief over his son Absalom is made all the more poignant by repetition:

בני אבשלום בני בני מי־יתן מותי אני תחתיך (2 Sam. 19:1)
אבשלום בני בני

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[1]It is quite possible, as we will detail in Chapter IV, that Hushai intends the words for David's benefit and not, as Absalom assumes, for himself. The Hebrew leaves the interpretation open; either David or Absalom could be the intended object of the exclamation.

[2]The entire dialogue between the wise woman and Joab (2 Sam. 20:16-21) is made more emphatic by the technique of expressing twice rather than once. We have two instances of the infinitive absolute preceding the finite verb (שאל ישאלו and דבר ידברו -verse 18), Joab's expression נשא ידו במלך בדוד (verse 21) and note also אם־אבלע שלמי אמוני ישראל (verse 20) and ואם־אשחית עיר ואם בישראל (verse 19).

בני אבשלום אבשלום בני בני (2 Sam. 19:5)

Immediately following these words Joab comes to David in the tower room and vents his wrath on the king who shows more concern for his son than for his throne and kingdom. The use of repetition makes this stand out as the most emphatic speech in the Succession Narrative. The address is flooded with repetitions, of נפש four times, of היום five times and then contrasted in the closing ultimatum with the word הלילה (verse 8), and especially of כי no fewer than seven times:[1]

(2 Sam. 19:6-8) הבשת היום את־פני כל־עבדיך הממלטים את־נפשך
היום ואת נפש בניך ובנתיך ונפש נשיך ונפש
פלגשיך לאהבה את־שנאיך ולשנא את־אהביך
כי הגדת היום כי אין לך שרים ועבדים
כי ידעתי היום כי לא אבשלום חי וכלנו היום
מתים כי־אז ישר בעיניך
ועתה קום צא ודבר על־לב עבדיך כי ביהוה
נשבעתי כי־אינך יוצא אם־ילין איש אתך הלילה
ורעה לך זאת מכל־הרעה אשר־באה עליך
מנעוריך עד־עתה

David is persuaded by Joab's argument, and goes to the gate to greet his troops. Later he too emphasizes the importance of this day of victory in speaking to Abishai:

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[1]Notice the reappearance in verse 7 of the motif of death and life from 2 Sam. 12 and the motif of love and hate from 2 Sam. 13.

(2 Sam. 19:23) מה־לי ולכם בני צרויה כי־תהיו־לי היום לשטן
היום יומת איש בישראל כי הלוא ידעתי
כי היום אני־מלך על־ישראל

At other places the sheer prominence given to an idea through repetition serves to impress that particular concept upon the listener. This seems to be the reason for the four-fold repetition in the last half of 2 Sam. 9:

(verse 7) ואתה תאכל לחם על־שלחני תמיד
(verse 10) ומריבעל בן־אדניך יאכל תמיד לחם על־שלחני
(verse 11) ומריבעל אכל על־שלחן דוד[1] כאחד מבני המלך
(verse 13) ומריבעל ישב בירושלם כי על־שלחן המלך
תמיד הוא אכל

While Meribaal will receive back the property of his ancestor Saul, he himself must always be present at David's table. Do not these repetitions imply that Meribaal, a direct descendant of Saul and as such a possible threat to the throne, would be kept under constant surveillance even while David was outwardly appearing to show him great beneficence?

3. Repetition as a Means of Retarding Action

At times the forward progress of a tale may be greatly slowed. The reaching of a conclusion or the cli-

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[1]We read שלחן דוד at verse 11 with the LXX and the Syriac; MT שלחני may be an error from verse 10.

mactic point is deliberately delayed and this delay serves the purpose of building and sustaining suspense in the listener. In the Tamar story in particular we find that repetition is the major technique used to achieve this retardation of action.

2 Sam. 13:1-22

Our author informs us immediately of Amnon's great affection for his half-sister (verses 1,2). But we are not fully aware of Amnon's specific intentions, and on this ambiguity suspense is built.[1] Our curiosity has been aroused, and we wonder what will happen to Tamar. The plot becomes more obvious as we learn of the plan proposed by Jonadab (verse 5). Amnon now has the means of getting his sister to his very side. At this point the story could proceed quite rapidly to the actual encounter of Tamar and Amnon. But instead the story's climax is delayed, and the technique used for this purpose is a series of requests followed by detailed descriptions of the executions of those requests. This request-execution pattern is really a sophisticated form of repetition. Each use of the pattern allows the author to linger over his story and increase the suspense. The first request is Jonadab's suggested plan for

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[1]William Empson, Seven Types of Ambiguity (3rd ed.; New York, 1955) discusses the importance of ambiguity in literature.

Amnon:

שכב על־משכבך והתחל ובא אביך לראותך (2 Sam. 13:5)
ואמרת אליו
תבא נא תמר אחותי ותכרני לחם ועשתה לעיני
את־הכריה למען אשר אראה ואכלתי מידה

Amnon carries out the suggestion, and our author describes this in the fullest possible detail:

וישכב אמנון ויתחל ויבא המלך לראתו (verse 6)
ויאמר אמנון אל־המלך
תבוא־נא תמר אחתי ותלבב לעיני
שתי לבבות ואכרה מידה

David in turn fulfills Amnon's request of him by sending Tamar to Amnon's house:

וישלח דוד אל־תמר הביתה לאמר (verse 7)
לכי נא בית אמנון אחיך ועשי־לו הכריה

Tamar heeds her father's command, and goes to Amnon's house and prepares food. Here the narrative expands still further, introducing details of no particular importance to the basic plot, but of great rhetorical usefulness in increasing the suspense:

ותלך תמר בית אמנון אחיה והוא שכב ותקח את־ (verses 8-9a)
הבצק ותלוש ותלבב לעיניו ותבשל את־הלבבות
ותקח את־המשרת ותצק לפניו וימאן לאכול

And then comes yet another command and report of its accomplishment:

ויאמר אמנון (2 Sam. 13:9b)
הוציאו כל־איש מעלי
ויצאו כל־איש מעליו

Now at last Amnon speaks to Tamar, but the action is delayed still further as another command is given and its fulfillment is reported:

ויאמר אמנון אל־תמר (verse 10)
הביאי הבריה החדר ואברה מידך
ותקח תמר את־הלבבות אשר עשתה
ותבא לאמנון אחיה החדרה

With the sixth request the narrative finally attains the climax:

ותגש אליו לאכל ויחזק־בה ויאמר לה (verse 11)
בואי שכבי עמי אחותי

But at this the turning point of the story the chain of command and ready agreement, adhered to until this moment, is broken. Tamar refuses this last request and pleads with Amnon, but he forces her.

1 Kings 1:5-31

This section of the Succession Narrative has been constructed with an elaborate pattern of repetitions which functions to delay arrival at the turning point.[1] There are three basic elements to this pattern:

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[1]The repetition of large blocks of narrative here is characteristic of the Ugaritic myths of AQHT and KRT and indeed of ancient Near Eastern mythological texts in general.

A. David's Oath:

(1 Kings 1:13) הלוא־אתה אדני המלך נשבעת לאמתך לאמר
כי־שלמה בנך ימלך אחרי
והוא ישב על־כסאי

The words of the oath itself are always preceded by an introductory formula, as here in verse 13 and again in verses 17, 24 and 30.

B. Adonijah's Coronation Feast:

(verses 9-10) ויזבח אדניהו צאן ובקר ומריא עם אבן הזהלח
אשר־אצל עין רגל ויקרא את־כל־אחיו בני המלך
ולכל־אנשי יהודה עבדי המלך ואת־נתן הנביא
ובניהו ואת־הגבורים ואת־שלמה אחיו לא קרא

Essentially the same account of the feast is later reported by both Bathsheba (verse 19) and Nathan (verses 25-26). The description in each instance begins with particulars of the feast, followed by a list of those who were invited to attend and then a list of those omitted.

C. The Question Posed of David:

(verse 20b) מי ישב על־כסא אדני־המלך אחריו

This question constitutes the theme of the section under consideration, and indeed the theme which unites the entire Succession Narrative.[1] It appears in Bathsheba's (verse 20b) and Nathan's (verse 27b) speeches to David, and is

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[1]Cf. the basic discussion of Rost, Thronnachfolge, pp. 194ff and our comments in Chapter V.

linked to and finally answered by David's reaffirmation of his oath in verse 30:

כי שלמה בנך ימלך אחרי
והוא ישב על־כסאי תחתי

By simply repeating and weaving together these three story elements, our author has greatly slowed the progress of the narrative to the turning point when David declares Solomon to be his rightful successor to the throne. Nathan's goal is to win from David a statement that Solomon is his proper successor to the throne. This goal is only achieved at the conclusion of the section (verses 29-30). As early as verse 13 we have heard of David's solemn oath which insures the continuation of his dynasty, but the speaker is Nathan rather than David. Nathan suggests to Bathsheba that she go before the king and remind him of his promise to her with the words:

(verse 13) הלוא־אתה אדני המלך נשבעת לאמתך לאמר
כי־שלמה בנך ימלך אחרי
והוא ישב על־כסאי

She follows the plan, and repeats with characteristic variations the oath which Nathan recited to her:

(verse 17) אדני אתה נשבעת ביהוה אלהיך לאמתך
כי־שלמה בנך ימלך אחרי
והוא ישב על־כסאי

And so the story moves forward, building more and more suspense through repetitions of David's supposed oath that his

son Solomon shall rule after him, and alternating now with the question, "Who will sit on your throne after you?" (verses 20b and 27b). Nathan comes in immediately after Bathsheba to confirm her words. He alters the oath for dramatic effect by substituting אדניהו for כי־שלמה בנך :

אדני המלך אתה אמרת (verse 24)
אדניהו ימלך אחרי
והוא ישב על־כסאי

At last David is convinced of the truth of the story, and he reaffirms the oath attributed to him by Nathan and Bathsheba. This the final and decisive iteration of the oath formulation is the most emphatic:[1]

חי־יהוה אשר־פדה את־נפשי מכל־צרה (verses 29-30)
כי כאשר נשבעתי לך ביהוה אלהי ישראל לאמר
כי־שלמה בנך ימלך אחרי
והוא ישב על־כסאי תחתי
כי כן אעשה היום הזה

1 Kings 1:32-35

This episode, like the preceding, is also dominated by repetition, but is more simply organized. The section consists of a threefold description of the coronation of Solomon (verses 32-37; 38-40; 41-48) and then concludes with Adonijah's flight to the altar and Solomon's conditional

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[1]There are further echoes of the theme at 1 Kings 1:35, 46, 48 and 2:12 and 24.

pardon of him (verses 49-53). This gives the following outline:

A. David gives his plan for the coronation of Solomon (verses 32-37)

B. The coronation takes place as planned (verses 38-40)

C. Jonathan reports the coronation to Adonijah (verses 41-48)

Here as in the preceding example the final repetition is the most emphatic. Jonathan's report of the details of the coronation goes beyond what has been previously given in narration (verses 38-40). There the account concludes as the people rejoice and follow after Solomon, while here Solomon is said to actually sit on the Davidic throne, and that his father has given him his blessing:

וגם ישב שלמה על כסא המלוכה וגם־באו (verses 46-48)
עבדי המלך לברך את־אדנינו המלך דוד לאמר
ייטב אלהיך את־שם שלמה משמך
ויגדל את־כסאו מכסאך
וישתחו המלך על־המשכב וגם ככה אמר המלך
ברוך יהוה אלהי ישראל
אשר נתן היום ישב על־כסאי ועיני ראות

4. Repetition and Climactic Point

Within a given unit of narrative, a particular phrase or sentence may be repeated several times, and then occur in a strikingly different way at the focal point of the story or the climax of the action. The phrase or sentence may be

significantly altered from its previous usage at this turning point or, as is often the case, this may be its final appearance.

2 Sam. 9

The climax of this story is reached when David meets the surviving son of Jonathan, returns to him the property of his ancestor Saul, and assigns him a place at David's table (verse 7). Following this statement by David, our author simply rounds out the story. David gives detailed instructions to Ziba (verses 9-11a) and then the fulfillment of David's plan is indicated in narrative (verses 11b-13).

The story builds to the climax in three stages, and each stage is centered about the motif of חסד . This motif appears at the very beginning:

הכי יש־עוד אשר נותר לבית שאול (verse 1)
ואעשה עמו חסד בעבור יהונתן

Saul's servant Ziba is one who might know of descendants of Saul, and so he is summoned to David (verse 2). David's interview with Ziba constitutes the second level of the story, and here again our motif is stated:

ויאמר המלך (verse 3)
האפס עוד איש לבית שאול
ואעשה עמו חסד אלהים

The king learns from Ziba of a son of Jonathan living at

Lo-debar. The third and climactic episode of the story consists of Meribaal's appearance before David. Here our motif is given its most emphatic expression, and in this way signals the turning point of the story:

ויאמר לו דוד (verse 7)
אל־תירא כי עשה אעשה עמך חסד
בעבור יהונתן אביך

1 Kings 2:13-25

Repetition is prominent throughout this story, and is used to link successive portions of the story with events which have preceded. For instance, Bathsheba asks Adonijah השלום באך and he replies שלום (verse 14). He begins his request of her with the words שאלה אחת אנכי שאל מאתך (verse 16) and she later uses the same expression herself in addressing the king:

שאלה אחת קטנה אנכי שאלת מאתך (verse 20)

The expression אל־תשבי את־פני and its variations are our particular concern, as this phrase is utilized rhetorically in building to the climax of the story. Adonijah requests his favor of Bathsheba with these words:

שאלה אחת אנכי שאל מאתך אל־תשבי את־פני (verse 16)

The phrase appears again when he tells her his plan for approaching Solomon:

אמרי־נא לשלמה המלך כי לא־ישיב את פניך (verse 17)

When Bathsheba comes to the king she too uses the expression:

שאלה אחת קטנה אנכי שאלת מאתך אל־תשב את־פני (verse 20)

In reply, Solomon repeats the by now expected phrase, as he promises to grant his mother's desire, whatever it may be:

שאלי אמי כי לא־אשיב את פניך (verse 20b)

Bathsheba then asks that Abishag be given to Adonijah. We have become accustomed to the ready acceptance of every request that has been made to this point, and Solomon has just indicated (verse 20b) that whatever Bathsheba wishes will be granted. But here at the climax of the episode the pattern is broken. Solomon understands that Adonijah's request is tantamount to asking for the throne, and he refuses to give up Abishag to his older brother.

1 Kings 1:1-4

This brief description of the search for a young woman to be at David's side builds to a climax by means of successively more elaborate descriptions of her physical beauty. The superlative expression is placed at the moment when she arrives at David's side.

David's servants indicate their desire to search for a נערה בתולה (verse 2). They then go out and search for a נערה יפה (verse 3) and they find Abishag and bring her to David: והנערה יפה עד־מאד (verse 4).

5. The Number of Repetitions

There is considerable evidence that the third repetition of a series was a favored climactic point for our author.[1] The climax is reached at the third repetition of the theme of טוב in 2 Sam. 9, the third attempt of Absalom to reach Joab is successful (2 Sam. 14:29-32), as is the third request of Ahimaaz to be allowed to carry news of the battle to David (2 Sam. 18:19-23). The third and final announcement that Uriah the Hittite is dead is the announcement before David, and can be said to be climactic (2 Sam. 11:17-24). The section 1 Kings 1:32-48 gives three descriptions of the coronation of Solomon, and the third is the most emphatic. The third report from the watchtower is distinguished by its different character, and it alone elicits a favorable response from David (2 Sam. 18:24-27). David attempts twice to convince Uriah to go to his wife (2 Sam. 11:7-13) and then makes other plans for getting rid of Bathsheba's husband.

But if these examples give evidence of a tendency to make the third repetition climactic, one can also find exceptions to the rule. The phrase "Meribaal will eat at my table" and its variations appears <u>four</u> times in 2 Sam. 9. Absalom's <u>second</u> attempt to get permission from his

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[1] Olrik, op. cit., pp. 4-5 discusses the "law of three" (<u>dreizahl</u>).

father to invite his brothers to his sheepshearing festival is successful (2 Sam. 13:24-27).

While the use of seven as a structural principle is of some significance, as evidenced above,[1] this writer is not convinced by Carlson's argument that the number seven is used to unify these narratives.[2]

Although we have not exhausted everything which might be said about repetition in the Succession Narrative, we have demonstrated that careful study of the placement and function of repetitions aids our exegesis of the corpus and gives us a clue as to the manner in which it was composed. We now turn to consideration of possible instances of irony within the Succession Narrative.

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[1]See pp. 84-85.

[2]Cf. Carlson, David, the Chosen King, pp. 155, 159, and 163ff.

CHAPTER IV

IRONY

1. Definition

A definition of irony is perhaps best not undertaken, as it eludes any precise demarcation. On the other hand, we need some guidelines lest we become too subjective and vague in identifying instances of the literary phenomenon. Both Thomson[1] and after him Good[2] begin their discussion of irony with reference to the etymology of the word, and we shall do well to follow their example.

The Greek eirōn or "ironical man" designated a character in early Greek comedy:

> The comedy presented the conflict (agōn) between two characters, the one called the alazōn, the other, the eirōn. The alazōn, we are told, may be called the "impostor", the eirōn, the "ironical man." The alazōn is the pompous fool, the pretender who affects to be more than he actually is. The eirōn, his antagonist, is the sly, shrewd dissimulator, who poses as less than he is. The conflict ends, of course, in the pricking of the alazōn's bubble, the triumph of the eirōn. There-

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[1]J. A. K. Thomson, Irony, An Historical Introduction (Cambridge, 1927), pp. 2-4.

[2]Edwin M. Good, Irony in the Old Testament (Philadelphia, 1965), pp. 13-14. Of other literature on the subject, Jakob Jónsson, Humor and Irony in the New Testament (Reykjavik, 1965) includes brief sections on the Old Testament and the Talmud and Midrash, and has an excellent bibliography. René Voeltzel, Le Rire du Seigneur (Strassburg, 1955; trans. from the German Das Lachen des Herrn [Hamburg-Bergstedt, 1961]) is more a philosophical treatise than a literary study of the Bible.

> in lies its comedy, for the spectator knows without doubt which character is the impostor, which the ironical man, and he knows what the end will be.[1]

We observe in Good's statement above several aspects of irony which will aid us in our own research. First, irony is brought out in a situation of contrast. In the case of Greek comedy, it is the contrast between the eirōn and the alazōn which draws our attention and initiates our perception of irony. Second, irony thrives in the incongruity of a given situation. Again referring to our classical example, the incongruous consists in the audience's perception that the eirōn is understating himself, and that the alazōn is pretending to be more than he is in reality. If we had to offer our own definition of irony we would emphasize this aspect of the concept, and say that irony exists when an observer perceives an incongruity between things as they are and things as they ought to be. Third, it is in the response of the audience that irony lives. The spectator, who understands who the eirōn is in reality, recognizes irony in his pretended role.

The last point brings also a note of caution. If irony must be recognized by its hearer, then it may be overemphasized or it may pass unnoticed. Irony is an elusive concept, and in this we must constantly recognize both a caution and a challenge.

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[1]Good, op. cit., p. 14.

Both Thomson[1] and Good[2] assert that the hearer may validly identify irony in a situation where none was intended by the author of the piece. Literature is seen by both scholars as in a dynamic relationship at all times with an ever-changing audience, and that what was ironical at one time may not be ironical in another age. While we appreciate this view of literature, we are unwilling to approach our study of irony in the Succession Narrative with this as a presupposition. In what follows, we shall defend all instances of irony we identify as deliberately intended by the author of the corpus.

Good suggests that irony may take one of three forms:

> It may be punctual irony, the use of words and expressions of ironic intention at particular, more or less isolated, "points." It may be episodic irony, the perception of an entire episode with an ironic aim or content. It may be thematic irony, the conjunction of a number of episodes all of which point to an ironic theme or motif. These three types of narrative irony may be interrelated.[3]

We find these distinctions helpful for our own study. We have therefore chosen to organize our analysis of irony in the Succession Narrative about the broadest of Good's three categories, that of "thematic irony". Our examples of irony are subsumed under four major themes: irony and wisdom,

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[1] Op. cit., pp. 112-13.

[2] Op. cit., p. 32.

[3] Ibid., pp. 81-82.

irony and fatherhood, irony and kingship, and irony and loyalty. We shall deal with instances of "punctual" and "episodic" irony as they appear within these larger categories.

2. Irony and Wisdom

In recent years much interest has developed in the supposed parallels between the wisdom literature of the ancient Near East and the Succession Narrative. The two most thorough inquiries along these lines are those of Rose[1] and Whybray.[2] Rose details numerous literary and thematic parallels betwen the Davidic narratives (1 Sam, 16-2 Sam. 20; 1 Kings 1-2) and ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature, and concludes that the wisdom tradition profoundly influenced the writing of the story of David's career. Whybray examines the parallels of expression between the book of Proverbs and the Succession Narrative. He goes even further than Rose, in that he concludes that the outlook of the two works he has considered is so similar that a wise man must have been responsible for the authorship of the Succession Narrative:

> It is here contended that there is a sufficiently close resemblance between Proverbs and the incidents and

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[1]Ashley Rose, "Wisdom Motifs in the Davidic Narratives (1 Sam 16-2 Sam 20; 1 K 1-2)", (unpublished dissertation, The Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, 1969).

[2]Op. cit.

> situations of the Succession Narrative to show that the author of the latter was not merely a man who shared the general outlook of the wisdom teachers, but was himself a wisdom teacher in the sense that he set out deliberately to illustrate specific proverbial teaching for the benefit of the pupils and ex-pupils of the school.[1]

More recently, Crenshaw[2] has challenged the current tendency to find wisdom influence throughout non-hagiographic Biblical literature. He asserts that a more cautious and thorough methodology is needed for this kind of comparative study and that a clearer understanding of what actually constitutes wisdom literature would serve to temper what he considers the current excesses of scholars. In particular, Crenshaw finds that themes in the Succession Narrative which Whybray would assign to wisdom literature are equally at home in legal and prophetic literature.[3] Crenshaw counter's Whybray's conclusion that a teacher of wisdom consciously illustrated themes of proverbial teaching in writing the Succession Narrative:

> Whybray's argument also suffers from a failure to explain non-wisdom emphases in the succession document. Especially damaging to his thesis is the minor rôle played by wisdom's representatives, indeed the questionable function of each. The total effect of counselors, both private and courtly, is ruinous.[4]

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[1] Op. cit., p. 95.

[2] J. L. Crenshaw, "Method in Determining Wisdom Influence upon 'Historical" Literature," JBL, LXXXVIII (1969), pp. 129-42. Crenshaw is particularly critical of the work of Shemaryahu Talmon, "'Wisdom' in the Book of Esther," VT, XIII (1963), pp. 419-55.

[3] Op. cit., pp. 138-39.

[4] Ibid., pp. 139-40.

Like Crenshaw, we find the attitude of the author of the Succession Narrative toward wisdom to be essentially negative. It is our contention that the author of the corpus intended his references to wisdom to be regarded in an ironic frame of reference for the most part.[1] We shall detail our support for this thesis by analyzing the role of wise men in the Succession Narrative, and then similarly the role of David as wise judge.

a. Jonadab

Amnon's friend Jonadab is a wise man, and is introduced as such with superlative words:

וליונדב איש חכם מאד (2 Sam. 13:3)

Jonadab offers a plan to Amnon by which he may be alone with his sister Tamar. The plan itself succeeds, but the consequences are disastrous. Tamar loses her virginity

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[1]An ironic view of the ability of non-Israelite wise men appears throughout the Old Testament. Cf. Gen. 41:8; Exod. 7-8; Judg. 5:29; Isa. 19:11-12; Esth. 1:13-22; Dan. 1:20. And cf. Crenshaw, op. cit., p. 134.

[2]The nuance of חכם could possibly be "shrewd" or "subtle". But Driver, Notes on...Samuel, p. 297 correctly counters that in that case the writer could have employed the better word ערום. We have no quarrel however with the argument that purely secular, non-moralizing wisdom was practiced first in Israel. Cf. William McKane, Prophets and Wise Men (Naperville, Ill.; 1965) and his bibliography. See also Whybray, op. cit., p. 58 and Henri Cazelles, "Les debuts de la sagesse en Israël," in Les sagesses du Proche-Orient ancien (Paris, 1963), pp. 27-39.

and with it all hope for her future. Amnon is slain by his brother Absalom, and then Absalom has to flee to avoid punishment. Even Whybray, who wishes to develop his thesis of the positive relationship between wisdom teaching and the Succession Narrative, has to conclude that Jonadab has not given wise instruction here:

> Amnon receives counsel from Jonadab which leads him to the rape of Tamar - though in this case the counsel is bad counsel, and therefore in fact folly, because it concerns itself only with methods and fails to calculate the consequences.[1]

If the far-reaching consequences of Jonadab's plan are totally without merit, then perhaps our author intended us to understand the attribution of great wisdom to Jonadab as ironic.[2] If we may accept this statement tentatively, then we may look for further supporting evidence.

The counsel itself which Jonadab gives begins with what may be called an ironic touch. It concerns the use of the hithpael of חלה "to be sick" with differing meanings in verses 2, 5 and 6. In verse 5 Jonadab suggests that Amnon lie on his bed and pretend to be ill.[3] But in verse 2 there is no pretense involved; here Amnon is actually sick of lust

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[1] Op. cit., p. 59.

[2] Whybray, ibid., p. 85 admits this possibility: "The statement that Jonadab is 'very wise' (hākām mᵉōd) is probably ironical: wisdom is not mere ingenuity; cleverness, unless it counts the consequences, is really folly."

[3] GK, paragraph 54e.

for Tamar.[1] The irony has its substance in these two differing meanings, the feigned illness and the actual sickness. It is the obvious ill appearance of Amnon which first attracts Jonadab's attention. With what ironic ease Amnon is then able to carry out Jonadab's instructions! In the third and final occurrence of the word (verse 6), the verb functions to describe both the false and the true sickness. It is both an act to deceive David, and yet it is also the true love sickness for Tamar!

But Jonadab has not calculated with the wrath of Absalom, who kills Amnon as revenge for his intercourse with Tamar. An exaggerated report of what has happened at the sheepshearing festival comes to David, stating that <u>all</u> of the king's sons have been killed (13:30). At this point our "very wise man" steps forward again. Listen to the words our narrator has him speak:

> Let not my lord say that they have killed all the young men, the king's sons, for Amnon alone is dead, for by the command of Absalom this has been determined from the day[2] he forced his sister Tamar. Now therefore let not my lord the king take it to heart, thinking that all the sons of the king are dead, for Amnon alone is dead (2 Sam. 13:32-33).

Not only does Jonadab indicate that he had previous knowledge of Absalom's intention to kill Amnon, a dangerous

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[1]Cf. de Vaux's felicitous rendering, <u>Les livres de Samuel</u>, p. 192: "Amnon était tourmenté au point de se rendre malade à cause de sa soeur Tamar."

[2]Reading with RSV for the difficult 13:32b.

disclosure to make, but our author has the man who was directly behind the events leading to the death of Amnon now dismiss lightly the demise of the very man he counseled. Where is the wisdom or even the craftiness in this speech?

The ironic picture of Jonadab is concluded with the words he speaks when the remaining sons of the king are finally sighted returning home:

> Behold the sons of the king have come; as your servant spoke, so has it come about (כדבר עבדך כן היה -13:35).

Within the context these words refer to the successful escape of the sons of the king from Absalom, and Jonadab's prediction that they would return. But it is possible that here too our author is placing words of self-condemnation in the mouth of Jonadab. The situation is enough like David's judgement upon himself in the presence of Nathan (2 Sam. 12: 1-13) and again before the wise woman of Tekoa (2 Sam. 14:1-13)[1] to suggest this. Jonadab's דבר has brought about these tragic events, and here he is made to confess to his guilt in an oblique way.

b. Ahitophel

Although the term חכם is not used of Ahitophel, he is referred to as David's "counselor" (יועץ דוד -15:12) and he gives counsel (עצה -15:31 and 34; 16:20 and 23; 17:7, 14, 15 and 21). Since "counsel" is the practical expression of

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[1]See further below on both of these passages.

wisdom, we may consider Ahitophel to be a representative of wisdom traditions in David's court.[1]

Absalom seeks advice as to his best plan of action in dealing with his father David. Ahitophel responds with a cogent and reasonable strategy (16:20-17:3). He will take a body of troops and lead them that very night after David, whom he correctly surmises to be in weak circumstances at this moment. Ahitophel reasons that David alone stands in the way of Absalom's usurpation of the throne, and therefore he intends to kill only the king. He stresses the need to placate the people who are on David's side, apparently realizing that these should not be alienated from Absalom if his reign is to be stable. Ahitophel makes most pointed the distinction he intends between David on the one hand and "all the people" (כל־העם) on the other by discussing the two alternately throughout his speech:

> I will pursue after David tonight, come upon him while he is weary and terrify him
>
> All the people with him will flee
>
> I will kill only the king
>
> and I will bring back all the people to you, as a bride returns to her husband

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[1]This view of the close connection of the counselor and the wise man is widely accepted. Cf. Rose, op. cit., p. 129; Whybray, op. cit., p. 57; McKane, Prophets and Wise Men, p. 55; Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology I, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (New York, 1962), p. 431 and P. A. H. de Boer, "The Counsellor," SVT, III (1955), pp. 42-71 and especially p. 56.

You seek the life of <u>one man only</u>[1]

and <u>all the people</u> will be safe (17:1-3).

Ahitophel's advice will bring immediate success with the least amount of bloodshed; it is clearly a worthy plan of action, and is received favorably by Absalom and the elders of Israel (17:4).

But Absalom wishes to hear also from Hushai, and so he is called and asked to comment on Ahitophel's counsel. Hushai does so, and in all aspects his advice is directly opposite that of Ahitophel. While Ahitophel had stated his plan succinctly and briefly, Hushai speaks at greater length and employs elaborate and exaggerated imagery. Ahitophel asserted that his plan will take David by surprise; Hushai counters that David will be the aggressor in an initial encounter with Absalom's troops (17:9). Ahitophel assumed, and correctly (cf. 2 Sam. 15:13ff.), that David's forces would be weak and tired from their flight; Hushai likens their strength to the explosive violence of a she-bear separated from her cubs (17:8 and 10). Ahitophel would move rapidly against David with a force of 12,000 men; Hushai will have Absalom take time to gather "all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba" (17:11) and go himself with that mighty force into battle. Ahitophel would kill only David; Hushai proposes to kill everyone found with David, and to utterly

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[1]Reading the fuller account of LXX at 17:3.

destroy any city which stands in the way (17:11-13).[1]

Taken at face value, Ahitophel's plan is obviously superior to that offered by Hushai.[2] An examination of side comments of our narrator confirms that conclusion. Immediately preceding Ahitophel's address in 17:1-3 is the statement:

> The counsel which Ahitophel advised in those days was equivalent to asking of the word of God, so was the counsel of Ahitophel regarded, both by David and by Absalom (16:23).

The placement of the superlative assessment of the value of Ahitophel's counsel immediately before that advice surely indicates that our narrator considered what he was about to say to be meritorious.[3] Similarly, immediately following the report that Ahitophel's advice had been rejected in favor of Hushai's, our narrator interjects another significant comment:

> But Yahweh had ordained to turn back the <u>good</u> counsel of Ahitophel (אֵת־עֲצַת אֲחִיתֹפֶל הַטּוֹבָה) in order that Yahweh might bring about misfortune for Absalom (17:14).

Irony in the case of Jonadab was based on the fact that his counsel was ultimately folly. But irony in the case of Ahitophel develops from the basis that his advice

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[1]For further discussion of the differences between these two speeches, see Adrien Drubbel, "Le conflit entre la Sagesse profane et la Sagesse religieuse," Bib., XVII (1936). pp. 48-51.

[2]So also concludes Rose, <u>op. cit.</u>, pp. 84-85.

[3]Cf. Rose, <u>ibid.</u>, p. 131: With this statement, "the author apprises the reader of the true nature of the case; Ahitophel's advice should have been accepted and implemented."

was far superior, and yet was rejected by Absalom.[1] The specious argumentation and the ambiguity of Hushai's speech emphasize the irony of the situation. Hushai knows full well where David and his forces are located, as he had recently been with them (15:37). We can readily appreciate the irony in Hushai's two deliberately vague references to David's location:

> Behold, even now he is hiding in some hollow or some place (באחד הפחתים או באחד המקומת -17:9).
>
> And we will come upon him in one of the locations where he may be found (באחד המקומת אשר נמצא שם -17:12).

There is further irony in Hushai's opening assertion:

> On this occasion Ahitophel's counsel is not good (לא־ טובה -17:7).

The irony here is that Ahitophel's counsel is indeed "not good", but only from David's point of view! For Absalom the counsel is preeminently sound. But Hushai's rhetoric wins Absalom to his point of view, and as he concludes his argu-

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[1]McKane, op. cit., p. 58 arrives at the same conclusion: "Ahitophel's 'esa is marked by psychological astuteness and brilliant simplicity. Hushai sets out to darken counsel and give bad advice, and he succeeds in his aim. The real fools are Absalom and the elders of Israel who cannot distinguish between a bold and serious plan and a bogus strategy. The irony of Absalom's case was that he rested his cause on the sagacity of his professional advisers and that he had one such adviser whose judgement was impeccable, but that neither he nor the elders of Israel had the critical astuteness to distinguish between vision and folly."

[2]Reading באחד for MT באחת to accord with masc. פחת . Cf. 2 Sam. 18:17.

[3]Reading באחד with the Qere. Cf. Driver, Notes on... Samuel, p. 323.

ment Absalom and "all of Israel" agree:

> The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better (טובה) than the counsel of Ahitophel (17:14a)

But in the last half of this same verse the true state of affairs is described:

> But Yahweh had ordained to turn back the good (הטובה) counsel of Ahitophel in order that Yahweh might bring about misfortune for Absalom. (17:14b)[1]

And so the episode concludes in a way appropriate to the irony of the situation. Hushai dispatches messengers to David to report Ahitophel's plan and urge that he withdraw further, even though Absalom had rejected that plan (17:15-22). Ahitophel, the man of great wisdom, goes home and kills himself (17:23)!

c. The Wise Woman of Tekoa

Recognizing that David wishes to be reconciled with his son Absalom (13:39-14:1), Joab enlists the help of a wise woman (אשה חכמה) from Tekoa (14:2).[2] She is instructed as to how to proceed and then comes before David, disguised as a widow in mourning. The woman pleads for a judgement from the king, claiming that her husband is dead, that one of her sons has killed the other, and that now her clan

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[1]We will explore the significance of this verse further in our concluding chapter.

[2]J. Hoftijzer, "David and the Tekoite Woman," VT, XX (1970), pp. 419-44 has a full discussion of the difficult text of this story.

intends to murder the remaining son, leaving her family without a male heir.[1] David promises to protect the son from harm, but the woman is still not satisfied, and presses David to take an oath to his determination on her son's behalf, which he then does. At this point (verse 13) the woman suggests that there is an analogy between her son's situation and that of David's "banished one" (נִדָּח -verse 13) and that the king has implicated himself in judging her case. David apparently recognizes that she is referring to Absalom, and he then ascertains from her that Joab is behind her actions. The episode closes as David grants the return of Absalom to Jerusalem and Joab goes to Geshur to accomplish that.

The entire episode is presented in a light mood, and gives a welcome relief from the tragic accounts of the rape of Tamar and death of Amnon which precede. The listener cannot help but be amused at the description of the wise woman of Tekoa, transformed for her interview into a disheveled mourner and pleading at such great length on behalf of a non-existent son.

There is irony in the inability of the wise woman to maintain her careful disguise throughout the interview. She wins a decision from the king with respect to her own

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[1]Blenkinsopp makes some very interesting stylistic comparisons between 2 Sam. 14:4-20 and the story of Cain and Abel (Gen. 4:1-16) in "Jonathan's Sacrilege," p. 449 and again in "Theme and motif," pp. 51-52.

hypothetical case (verses 10-11) and then immediately accuses David of guilt in his handling of his own son Absalom. Perhaps one could say that at this point she has accomplished her purpose by winning an oath from David and that her disguise is no longer necessary. But why then would she attempt to resume her presumed role (verses 15ff.)?[1] And it is only later that David specifically pardons Absalom (14:21ff.). It appears rather that, having drawn the analogy between her case and that of Absalom, she wishes to prevent David from fully exposing her subterfuge with Joab, and therefore she reverts in verses 15ff. with even greater enthusiasm to presentation of her own plea.[2] But David is not convinced, and seemingly as the woman finally pauses to catch her breath, he demands to know whether Joab is responsible for her actions.

Like the counsel of Jonadab, the wisdom of the woman enables her to achieve an immediate goal but ultimately results in disaster. That is, Absalom is reconciled with his father (14:33), but this reconciliation is immediately followed by Absalom's scheming to take the throne from David (15:1ff.). As in the case of Jonadab, the accomplishment of

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[1]Stanley Cook, "Notes on the Composition of 2 Samuel," AJSL, XVI (1899-1900), p. 158 and after him Budde, op. cit., p. 267 are so troubled by the change of mood in the woman's speech at verse 15 that they conclude that verses 15-17 belong between verses 7 and 8!

[2]So reasons Caird, op. cit., p. 1119.

the wise woman must also be regarded as ironic or at least empty of value.

David too is referred to as wise in this chapter, and again there appears to be irony involved. The wise woman twice speaks of David's divine ability to arbitrate judicial questions (verses 17 and 20). The first statement follows David's decision and oath on behalf of the widow's son and the woman's direct accusation of David as convicting himself in having given such a judgement (verses 10-13). David has just been duped by this disguised woman into rendering a judgement against himself. We would hardly regard his ability to discern the truth of the situation or the correct judgement as particularly praiseworthy in these circumstances! If he has rendered proper justice for the widow's son, then why has he not done the same for his own son?[1] The irony is based on David's inability to perceive proper justice for his own son until forced into recognizing it by the woman's parallel case. Nor has David's wisdom aided him in avoiding the trap into which this woman has led him. Her words of praise at this point are flattering, placating, and ironic:

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[1]The episode between Nathan and David (12:1-15a) is of the same pattern. As here, a hypothetical case is presented for David's judicial decision. But the case actually concerns David's own conduct, and in rendering his determination the king actually passes judgement upon himself. This fact is then made clear by the individual standing before him. In both instances there is irony in that David's decision is proper but to his own detriment.

> My lord the king is like the angel of God in that he is able to discern right from wrong (14:17).

David then questions the woman as to Joab's role in her actions, and she admits to his complicity, but smooths over the conspiracy by closing with another glowing statement of David's great wisdom:[1]

> My lord has wisdom like the wisdom of the angel of God in that he knows all that takes place on earth (14:20).

It is possible that our author intended both of these statements to be taken seriously, as just praise of David's ability to judge, but in the overall context it is difficult to accept that view. David has finally had the insight that Joab is responsible for the woman's actions. But he has also allowed himself to be talked into a compromising position by this loquacious woman!

d. David and Meribaal

David's encounter with Meribaal as he returns to Jerusalem (19:25-31) is another instance where reference is

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[1]Norman Porteous, "Royal Wisdom," SVT, III (1955), p. 248 hints at the possible irony in the words of the woman here: "Even though the language is extravagant and the wise woman may have had her tongue in cheek, it cannot have sounded altogether absurd." But Cazelles, "A propos d'une phrase de H. H. Rowley," SVT, III (1955), pp. 26-27 states: "Aussi, lorsqu'en ce passage de Samuel, la femme de Tékoa loue David d'avoir autant de sagesse qu'un ange de Dieu il ne faut pas croire que sous la plume du rédacteur de la succession de David ce soit là l'expression d'une admiration sans mélange....la Sagesse en question est la même que l'insidieuse sagesse de Jonadab au chapitre précédent (xiii 3) dont les conseils aboutissent en effet à livrer Thamar à Amnon mais avec les conséquences que l'on sait."

made to the king's divine ability to discern right from wrong, although here there is no specific mention of David's "wisdom". Ziba had previously (16:1-4) met David and accused his master Meribaal of rejoicing over David's plight. David was convinced of the truth of Ziba's assertions, and immediately assigned to Ziba all of the property which he had previously granted to Meribaal. But now Meribaal comes forward, accusing his servant Ziba of lying about him before the king:

> He slandered your servant before my lord the king, but my lord the king is like the angel of God; do what seems good to you (19:28).

David responds by now dividing the land equally between Ziba and Meribaal.

Again the reference to David's unique ability to discern could be said to be ironic. David has hastily, and without first consulting the accused, deeded all of Meribaal's property over to his servant when the latter appeared with needed supplies and the report that his master was gleeful over David's flight from Jerusalem. This could hardly be said to be a decision of prudent reflection and assessment of both sides of the issue! And then later he retracts even this decision, and divides the land between Ziba and Meribaal (19:30). David appears unable to determine which person is telling the truth, and again his ability to judge is viewed ironically.

There are two further examples of wisdom in the Succession Narrative, but neither of these can be said to be ironic. The wise woman (אשה חכמה -20:16) of Abel agrees to hand over Sheba's head to Joab if he will save her city from siege (20:21). Crenshaw[1] regards her counsel as "ruinous", but this writer fails to see that. While she betrays her kinsman Sheba, she does what is practical in the circumstances. With Cazelles[2] we regard this as a less than admirable view of wisdom, but we cannot say that wisdom is presented negatively or ironically here. Similarly, Nathan gives counsel (עצה -1 Kings 1:12) to Bathsheba as to how to bring about her son's ascension to David's throne, and that goal is achieved in due course.

3. Irony and Fatherhood

Any careful reader of the Successsion Narrative takes note of the passivity which David displays toward his sons.[3] Amnon, Absalom and Adonijah all act in ways abhorrent

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[1]Op. cit., p. 140.

[2]Cazelles, "A propos d'une phrase de H. H. Rowley," p. 27.

[3]The evaluation of David as a father is often quite harsh. For instance, Whybray, op. cit., p. 38 concludes that "the real cause of David's vacillations was a maudlin sentimentality which overruled his common sense in all matters connected with his children."

to their father, and he in turn is shown as unable to control or discipline his sons properly. In this section we shall present the specifically rhetorical techniques with which our narrator has described David as a father, and determine to what extent David has been dealt with in an ironic manner in this role. We begin with an analysis of the episode of David and Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11:1-12:31). As we have already considered this episode above,[1] we may deal with it more briefly here.

David is shown negatively in several aspects in this story. He allows his desire for Bathsheba to dominate a more rational judgement and violates another man's wife. Then he uses subterfuge in an attempt to cover his action, and when that effort fails he arranges for the death of the woman's husband.

While the story of David and Bathsheba has much to say about David the man and about David the king, it does not inform us as to David's role as a father. Or does it? When we compare this story with the episode immediately following (13:1-22), we find that the mistakes of Amnon follow the pattern established by the father David. It appears that David's errors have been deliberately placed alongside the parallel mistakes of his son Amnon, and thereby the weaknesses of the son are displayed as patterned

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[1]See above, pp. 63-73.

after the same weaknesses of his father.

Both the account of the rape of Tamar and the story of David and Bathsheba open with a short scene in which the motivation of the chief character is revealed for the audience. David sees Bathsheba bathing, and "the woman was very beautiful" (11:2). Without a pause, the narrative then relates that David determines her identity and has her summoned to him. The narrator links the description of the woman's beauty directly with David's desire for her:

> ...and the woman was very beautiful. And David sent and inquired about the woman (והאשה טובת מראה מאד וישלח דוד וידרש לאשה -11:2b-3a).

The same technique is employed to identify Amnon's motivation in the next story. Here again the beauty of the woman is stressed at the very beginning and then followed immediately by an indication of Amnon's desire for her:

> David's son Absalom had a beautiful sister, whose name was Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her (ולאבשלום בן־דוד אחות יפה ושמה תמר ויאהבה אמנון בן־דוד - 13:1).

Of course, David's motivation in seeking Bathsheba is suggested indirectly, while Amnon's desire for Tamar is specified (13:1 and 4). But otherwise the two stories begin in identical manner, and suggest that our narrator wishes to convey to us by this parallel that the father and his son share the same personality trait.

There are further features of the two stories which confirm that the narrator deliberately constructed his account so as to exhibit the son's actions as a repetition

of those of his father. In both stories there is a suggested play on the word "couch" (משכב) and the verb "to lie with" (שכב). David rises from his couch (משכבו -11:2) and sights Bathsheba; the narrative then quickly leads us to his intercourse with her (וישכב עמה -11:4). So too, Amnon prostrates himself in feigned illness upon his couch (משכב -13:5, 6 and 8), lures Tamar to him, and rapes her (וישכב אתה, 13:14). While it is possible that this word play in the adjoining stories is fortuitous, it suggests that the actions of Amnon and of David may have been initially conceived of as in parallel with one another.[1]

Both Amnon and David are displayed as men of power, able to command what they desire. Both individuals use the imperative mood frequently. David sends (שלח) his troops out to battle (11:1), sends to inquire about the beautiful woman (11:3), sends to have her brought to him (11:4), and then sends to Joab and orders Uriah sent to him (11:6). He orders Uriah to his home (11:8), commands him to remain in Jerusalem another day (11:12), and then sends him back with

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[1]Carlson, David, the Chosen King, passim has shown the importance of understanding the way in which episodes of 2 Sam. are placed in relation to one another. He believes that a redactor of these chapters repeated certain words, or verba associandi, as a way of relating and linking together successive episodes. We agree with him in principle, but we think that he exaggerates the importance of the technique at times. For instance, we cannot agree with his assertion, ibid., p. 189 that the appearance of "eat bread" and "food" in 2 Sam. 12:17 and then in 13:5-7 and 10 is significant evidence of an intended link between these two chapters; the words are too common to be assigned such importance.

a letter commanding his murder (11:15) and sends for Bathsheba to be his wife (11:27). Similarly, Amnon requests the presence of Tamar at his bedside (13:6), orders his servants to leave him alone with her (13:9), summons her into an inner room (13:10), commands her to lie with him (13:11), and then orders her to leave (13:15) and summons his servant to accomplish this (13:17).

Again, both father and son use very devious means to achieve their purposes. The entire eleventh chapter is a study of David's desperate attempts to cover his misdeed with Bathsheba. And Amnon adopts the treacherous plan proposed by Jonadab and lures his sister into a private room.

Finally, in both stories a somewhat minor character is presented as a model of proper behavior and serves to contrast the base motivation of the major character. Uriah lectures David on the need to adhere to the rules of sacred warfare (11:11), while Tamar declares to Amnon that he is about to commit a folly and that the end result of his action will only be tragic for both of them (13:12-13). The strong literary parallels between these two stories stress that the son's behavior is a consequence of the prior actions of his father. Indeed, the second story demonstrates the working out of Nathan's prophecy that Yahweh will raise up evil from within David's own house as punishment for his crimes (2 Sam. 12:11).

This interpretation is supported by other literary considerations. As we have already seen,[1] the story of Tamar's rape is most pointedly a story about the children of David. In the opening verse both Amnon and Absalom are specifically referred to as sons of David:

> And it came about after this, that Absalom the son of David had a beautiful sister whose name was Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her (13:1).

Now one could discount these references as necessary to establish the identity of the protagonists. But then too, notice how Jonadab addresses Amnon:

> Why are you so melancholy every morning, O son of the king: will you not tell me? (13:4)

Moreover, David is deliberately included in the events leading to the rape of Tamar. He is a vital link in the chain of directives which finally bring Tamar to her brother. David suspects nothing amiss in Amnon's request, and orders Tamar to go to see him.

In the light of all this evidence, it appears that our narrator attributes Amnon's faults to the same flaws his father displayed earlier with respect to Bathsheba. Although David is a passive participant in the story of Amnon and Tamar, he is implicated in the treacherous actions of his son, and the motivation behind those actions.

With what consummate irony we hear then of David's hollow reaction to the news of what his son has done:

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[1]See above, pp. 90-94.

> And when the king David heard of all these things, he was very angry (וַיִּחַר לוֹ מְאֹד), but he was unwilling to trouble his son Amnon about it, for he loved him because he was his first born (13:21).[1]

What a comment on a father's responsibility to discipline his son!

But David does not learn his lesson from these tragic events, as now our attention focuses upon Absalom, and again the father fails to exercise proper control over his son. Our narrator involved David in the actions of his son Amnon by describing an interview in which the father acquiesced to his son's request (13:6). Similarly the story of Absalom includes an interview in which David is shown as passive toward his son. Absalom comes before his father and requests that the king and his officers come to his sheepshearing festival (14:24ff.). But David refuses, saying that such a large company would be too cumbersome. Absalom insists (וַיִּפְרָץ־בּוֹ -13:25) but David is firm, and concludes the interview by blessing his son.[2] But Absalom persists, suggesting that in that case could Amnon come to the festival. David's reply suggests that he suspects the motivation behind this request:

> Why should he go with you? (13:26b)

But Absalom insists again (וַיִּפְרָץ־בּוֹ -13:27) and this time David yields to his son and permits Amnon and all of his

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[1]Reading the fuller account preserved in LXX.

[2]Cf. Hertzberg, op. cit., p. 327.

other sons to go to the festival.

Amnon is killed and Absalom flees to Geshur. David mourns greatly for his dead son (13:36-37), but our narrator makes no mention of his anger toward Absalom. Instead, the emphasis is placed on the indulgent father's desire to be reconciled with his son:

> And the spirit of the king longed to go forth to Absalom for he was comforted about Amnon, seeing he was dead (13:39).[1]

Joab and the wise woman succeed in having Absalom returned to Jerusalem, but David bars the son from his presence. After two years of waiting, Absalom demands of Joab that he see his father, even if it means his own death. But far from killing Absalom, David greets him with a kiss (14:33).

Immediately following the reunion with his father, our narrator begins the story of Absalom's attempted coup d'état. By placing the first rebellious moves of Absalom in immediate proximity with his reconciliation with David, as he earlier placed Amnon's lust alongside that of his father, our narrator again links the personality and motivation of the son with the father and the father's approach to the son.

Absalom displays himself prominently and lures to his side the men of the northern tribes with flattering words (15:1-6). Then follows yet a third scene in which

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[1]Translating this difficult verse with RSV.

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David unwittingly gives permission to a son to commit folly (15:7-9). Absalom comes to his father and requests to be allowed to go to Hebron to fulfill a vow to the Lord. Once again the father gives in readily, not even questioning the motivation of this son who has already caused so much trouble. Does he not wonder that his son has waited a full four years to fulfill his vow?[1]

The news of Absalom's plot comes to David, and he flees Jerusalem with his supporters (15:13ff.). In the course of his flight a Benjaminite named Shimei meets him and hurls curses and stones in his direction (16:5ff.). Responding to Abishai's request to kill the offender, David replies with a pun which points up the irony of his position as father:

> Behold my son (בני) who came out of my loins seeks my life; how much more now this Benjaminite (בן־הימיני -16:11).

But if David perceives here the disastrous possibilities for himself of the revolt of Absalom, he fails to act accordingly. As the drama draws to a close with the defeat of Absalom's forces and his death, our narrator stresses the distinction between the obvious need to preserve the monarchy and David's sole concern for the life of his son. This distinction is presented ironically throughout 2 Sam. 18:1-19:9.

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[1]Reading "four years" with Lucian at 2 Sam. 15:7 for the impossible MT "forty years".

As his troops sally forth to do battle with Absalom's forces, David remains behind. The words with which he sends out his brave troops are not words of encouragement or even advice as to how to conduct the battle, but rather words which are absurd in this moment of crisis:

> And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, "Deal gently for my sake with the young boy Absalom" (18:5).

Taken in context the listener must appreciate the extreme irony of David's statement. Absalom has schemed against his father, plotted for years to take over the throne, had intercourse with his father's concubines as a demonstration of his usurpation of the throne, and readily assented to Ahitophel's plan to kill his father. The father, on the other hand, wants once more to be reconciled with his son and to save the life of the one man who endangers all. The listener understands Absalom to be powerful and totally ruthless; David, on the contrary, sees him as but a youth (נער -18:5 and 12).

The bringing of the news of the battle and of Absalom's death to David affords our narrator an excellent opportunity to emphasize the irony of David's point of view. This irony is conveyed, as we have seen above,[1] by the key word נער . Throughout the episode David hopes for good news, but that for him consists in learning that his son has been spared death. The point of view of Ahimaaz and the Cushite is of

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[1]See pp. 97-102.

course more realistic; the king should rejoice because Yahweh has delivered him from all his enemies, including his own son (cf. 18:19 and 31).

Upon hearing that Absalom has died, David wishes that he could have died in place of his son (19:1ff.). How Joab must have felt when he heard of that! All that he and the troops had fought for is of no consequence to David. The Lord's anointed wishes that he could die in place of the man who would wrench the throne from him by force! David's army had explicitly demanded that he not risk his life on the battlefield (18:3). But David would give it away in return for the life of the very man who instigated the revolt. So, in the ultimate irony,

> The army stole into the city that day, as an army which has been humiliated by fleeing from battle would do (19:4).

But Joab recognizes the absurdity of the king's position, and spells this out for him:

> You have humiliated today all the officers who have today rescued you and your sons and your daughters and your wives and your concubines...you love those who hate you and you hate those who love you...I realize now that if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead today, that would be acceptable to you (19:6-7).

In David's old age another son attempts to take the throne from him. This son's rebellion is introduced with exactly the same themes with which our narrator described the earlier revolt of Absalom. Both Adonijah and Absalom before him prepare for themselves a chariot and fifty men to run before it (2 Sam. 15:1 and 1 Kings 1:5). Like Absalom,

Adonijah is handsome (2 Sam. 14:25-26 and 1 Kings 1:6). In fact, the beauty of Adonijah is specifically linked by our narrator with that of his brother before him:

> Now he too was very handsome, and he was born after Absalom (וגם־הוא טוב־תאר מאד ואחר ילדה אחרי אבשלום - 1 Kings 1:6)

Finally and most significantly, the passive stance of the father toward his son is again noted (cf. LXX of 2 Sam. 13:21):

> Now his father had never troubled him by saying, "Why have you done such a thing?" (1 Kings 1:6)

In all these ways our narrator is telling us that yet another son of David is about to rebel, and again, tragically and ironically, the father will do nothing to stop him.

4. Irony and David as King

If David displays great weakness throughout the Succession Narrative in his role as father, then he does so also in his role as king.[1] We begin with consideration of the story of David and Bathsheba, throughout which a negative and ironic view of David as king is presented.[2]

Irony is hinted at in the very first words of the story:

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[1]Again we offer the judgement of Whybray, op. cit., p. 36: "Yet over and over again, as king and statesman, he shows the most absurd ineptitude". Similarly Jackson, op. cit., pp. 187-88.

[2]For an excellent discussion of irony in the narrative of Saul's kingship, see Good, op. cit., pp. 56-80.

> In the spring of the year, at the time when kings[1] go forth to war, David sent Joab and his officers and all Israel; and they ravaged the Ammonites and lay siege to Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem (11:1).

The irony here consists of the deliberate contrast between the first sentence and the second. David the king does not do what kings are accustomed to do, that is, go forth to war with the army when the weather is favorable for a campaign. The contrast is made more pointed by the juxtaposition of the lengthy statement describing the campaign by Joab, his officers, and "all Israel" to the very brief statement "but David remained in Jerusalem."[2] In these two statements everyone's location is given, and the impression is that all but David are in the battlefield, while he alone relaxes securely in Jerusalem.

The hint of irony in the opening verse is confirmed in what follows. As the story develops, the dimensions of irony expand. David has intercourse with Bathsheba, she declares herself to be pregnant, and the king summons her

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[1]Read the Qere המלכים for MT המלאכים in 11:1.

[2]The analysis is that of Perry and Sternberg, op. cit., p. 268. Schulz, Die Bücher Samuel, p. 113 recognized that this verse was highly critical of David: "Der Verfasser will andeuten: hätte David es so gemacht, wie 'die Könige', dann wäre er nicht in Sünde gefallen. Good, op. cit., pp. 35-36 arrives at a similar judgement. Budde, op. cit., p. 251 disagrees, saying that the style of 11:1 is simply the correct "Redensart" and that it is not critical of David. But his only supporting examples, 1 Kings 20:22, 26 and 2 Chr. 36:10 are not applicable. Carlson, David, the Chosen King, p. 147 takes a middle position, saying that 11:1 is critical of David but that "this must not be overemphasized."

husband from the battlefield. Our narrator deals at length with David's attempts to manipulate Uriah and with the latter's refusal to comply. The two are presented as opposite personalities, as we have already seen.[1] Uriah is a study of loyalty to the canons of sacred warfare. David, on the contrary, has indulged himself with another man's wife. The irony here is that the king, the upholder of justice for all his people, represents the lowest of motives while his subordinate has the highest of ideals.[2]

Joab carries out the king's command to have Uriah killed, but he modifies the suggested plan so that Uriah does not die alone but rather with other soldiers. In this way there will be no subsequent suspicion of David's involvement in the man's death. Joab sends a battle report to David and instructs his messenger as to how to react to David's anger over the casualty report. Joab even foretells the very words with which David will address him.[3] There are several points of irony in this portion of the story. First of all, we must marvel at this commander who can predict verbatim David's reaction. Second, there is irony in David's heated response to news of the deaths, for after all it was

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[1]See above, pp. 71 and 102-107.

[2]Good, op. cit., p. 36 notes that there is irony in Uriah's stubbornness, for this eventuates in his death.

[3]Reading the fuller account preserved in LXX at verse 22.

David who ordered the killing of Uriah. Third and finally, there is irony in David's change of mood on learning that Uriah has died along with the other men. As Perry and Sternberg put it so well, the incongruity here is that David reacts angrily over the death of many, but then is calm on hearing of the death of one further individual.[1] Now David sends a reply to Joab:

> Do not let this matter trouble you, for the sword devours indiscriminately (כי־כזה וכזה תאכל החרב); renew your attack upon the city and overthrow it (11:25).

But the sword has not devoured at random or indiscriminately; it has consumed exactly him whom David had marked for death! Jackson notes further ironic dimensions in David's reply:

> David's anger was utterly squashed by the news of Uriah's death, and he, this home-front commando, proceeded to lecture Joab on the horrors of war - as if Joab needed to be reminded of the irrationality of battle![2]

Our narrator's exploitation of the ironic dimensions of the king is not yet complete. Now that Uriah is dead, he describes David and Bathsheba as perfect models of respect for the customs of the time. Like any loyal wife, Bathsheba mourns the death of her husband, and David waits patiently. Our narrator suggests here an ironic contrast between the outward appearance of respect for custom over against the violence and the criminal activity which have taken place.

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[1] Op. cit., p. 279.

[2] Jared Jackson, "David's Throne: Patterns in the Succession Story," CJT, XI (1965), p. 188.

The same narrative technique appeared earlier; intercourse between David and Bathsheba had not taken place until after she had purified herself of her menstrual period.[1] As Perry and Sternberg express it, David commits adultery but does not violate her impurity. He is careful about details, but not for matters of greater importance.[2]

Now Nathan comes and describes a legal problem for the king's consideration and decision (12:1ff.). The case is intended to draw a judgement from David which at the same time will condemn his own crimes. There is irony here in David's reaction of such extreme indignation and self-righteousness to the relatively mild crime of the rich man. David practiced so much injustice to this point of the story; now he is so careful about proper justice:

> And David was very angry with the man, and said to Nathan, "As the Lord lives, the man who did this deserves to die, and he must restore the lamb fourfold[3] because he did such a thing and because he had no pity (12:5).

The theft of a lamb is punishable by restoration in kind, and even fourfold restoration (Exod. 21:37). But the theft of a lamb is not punishable by death ("the man who did this deserves to die" - בן־מות), whereas David's own crimes of adultery and murder are punishable by death (Lev. 20:10,

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[1]The mention of the conclusion of the menstrual period also serves to confirm that David and no one else is the father of the child.

[2]Op. cit., p. 270.

[3]Retaining MT "fourfold". Although LXX has "seven-fold", MT is supported by the other versions.

Deut. 22:22-24, Num. 35:20-35). With what stunning force come Nathan's words now:

> You are the man! (12:7)

Following the birth of Solomon our story turns again to the siege of Rabbah (12:26ff.). The conclusion of the campaign against Rabbah described in these verses is contrasted to the opening of the siege (11:1), and again David is placed in an ironic position. Where formerly David was in a position of authority, and sent Joab and the troops off to besiege the Ammonite capital, now it is Joab who has assumed command, and appears to summon David against the city:[1]

> I have fought against Rabbah and I have taken the city of waters. And now, you gather the rest of the army and encamp against the city and take it, lest I take the city and it be named after me (12:27-28).

Before his involvement with Bathsheba, David had been in command of Joab. And even following the death of Uriah, David had instructed his commander to overthrow Rabbah:

> Strengthen your attack upon the city, and overthrow it (11:25).

But now it is Joab's turn, and he summons the king out to battle. And so at last the king does what is appropriate (cf. 11:1); in compliance with Joab's suggestion, he goes forth to battle!

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[1]See Jackson's similar assessment, op. cit., p. 189. Hans Boecker, Redeformen des Rechtlebens im Alten Testament (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1964), pp. 166-68 discusses the legal aspects of Joab's statement.

David conquers Rabbah, but what a hollow victory it is! Throughout the story our narrator has carefully emphasized that Joab and his troops were waging war while David remained in Jerusalem (11:1; 11:11). Ironically, now that the enemy has been broken, the king comes and takes great booty.

There remain several notable places in the Succession Narrative where David is treated negatively and ironically in his role as king. Most of these instances occur in the description of David's flight from Jerusalem.

David does nothing to prevent Absalom from going to Hebron, and we must conclude that he does not doubt his son's avowed reason for going there (15:7-9). But then news comes of Absalom's rebellion. Here the weakness of the king is suggested, as we listen to his frantic instructions to flee from Jerusalem:

> Arise and let us flee, or none of us will escape from Absalom. Make haste to leave, or he will hasten and overtake us and bring down evil upon us and smite the city with the edge of the sword (15:14).

This hardly sounds like a man of marvelous military accomplishments! The brief response of David's retainers hints that they are far more composed than their king:

> Whatever our lord the king decides to do, we are at your service (15:15).

So the king sets out from the city, and our narrator leads him through a series of individual encounters on his journey. David demonstrates great practical wisdom in some

of these situations, as when he dispatches Hushai to counter Ahitophel's counsel (15:33-36). But he also is shown as weak and despairing in this crisis. Consider David's first encounter, that with Ittai (15:19-22). The king sees the foreign mercenary approaching and addresses him:

> Why should you go with us? Turn back and stay with the king (15:19).

What is this? Is David really ascribing the title of monarch to his son? In the context, this attribution of kingship by David to his son can only be seen as a sign of utter despair.[1] David is sincerely assigning the title to Absalom; he is not intending these words to be sarcastic.[2]

But if there is no irony intended in David's words here, there is irony in his point of view. For David is king, and his supporters consider that he alone is worthy of the title. Ittai's reply most emphatically stresses whom he considers to reign:

> As my Lord lives and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king is, whether for death or for life, there also your servant will be (15:21).

With these words, Ittai denies David's assertion that there is another king whom he can serve! Moreover, the narrator himself stresses that David is the rightful king. In the

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[1]So L. H. Brockington, "I and II Samuel," in Peake's Commentary on the Bible, ed. M. Black and H. H. Rowley (New York, 1962), p. 335; de Vaux, Les livres de Samuel, p. 205; Budde, op. cit., p. 272.

[2]So asserts Schulz, Die Bücher Samuel, pp. 184-85.

verses immediately preceding David's despairing statement, he repeatedly refers to David as "the king" (verses 16, 16, 17, 18 and 19).[1]

Later on his journey the Benjaminite Shimei meets David and his supporters. Here again our narrator places David in an ironic spotlight. Consider with what impunity this man is able to abuse the ruler of Israel, and to stone all of his supporters:

> When king David came to Bahurim, there came out from there a man of the house of Saul, named Shimei the son of Gera, and as he came he cursed continually and threw stones at David and at all king David's retainers and all the army and all the mighty men to his right and to his left (16:5-6).

As the scene closes, Shimei follows after the group, cursing and hurling stones and showering with dirt (16:13). With a final touch of irony, the episode concludes:

> And the king and all the people with him arrived weary at the Jordan,[2] and there he caught his breath (וינפש שם -16:14).

Indeed we should expect David to be wearied by all this!

Following the defeat of Absalom's forces, David recovers his confidence somewhat. When Shimei comes begging forgiveness, Abishai requests to be allowed to kill this man who dared to curse the Lord's anointed. But David responds:

> Should anyone die today in Israel? For do I not know that this day I am king over Israel? (19:23)

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[1]Rose, op. cit., p. 188 comments similarly on the profuse use of the word מלך in 2 Sam. 15:15-37.

[2]Adding "at the Jordan" with LXX.

It is as though David has at last been convinced that he is truly in command!

Our final example of irony and kingship occurs at the close of the Succession Narrative (1 Kings 1:1-4). Picture this once lusty man, now old and feeble, unable to keep himself warm even though covered with blankets. But his servants have a suggestion: Bring an attractive virgin to the king, and let her warm him. Can we avoid the irony implied in this suggestion? Our king, who once lusted for beautiful Bathsheba, will surely respond to another beautiful woman. And so Abishag is brought to him, and she is "very beautiful" (verse 4). Then comes the punch line:

> But the king did not have relations with her (1 Kings 1:4)

5. Irony and Loyalty

Much of the theme of loyalty in the Succession Narrative is contained in the description of the relations between David and Meribaal and his servant Ziba.[1] This story is dispersed throughout the corpus (2 Sam. 9; 16:1-4; 19:24-30) and yet is virtually self-contained. The three episodes are lightly conceived, and bring much humor to relieve the more dramatic scenes which surround them.

Throughout the whole account there is an ambiguity

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[1]Whybray, op. cit., pp. 42-43 and 93-95 notes the importance of the theme of loyalty for the author of the Succession Narrative.

about the sincerity of the characters, and in turn David, Meribaal and Ziba all display questionable loyalty toward one another. The question with which scholars have long concerned themselves is whether it is Meribaal or Ziba who is telling the truth (cf. 16:1-4 and 19:24-30).[1] We feel that our narrator was more concerned with loyalty and the irony of loyalty than with this particular question. But we believe that Meribaal is presented as the sincere person, and will support that contention with rhetorical analysis.

Chapter nine of 2 Sam. opens with David's question:

> Is there anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him <u>hesed</u> for the sake of Jonathan? (9:1)

This statement gives rise to two emotions in the listener. On the one hand, David appears to be genuinely seeking to bestow a kindness on one of the family of Jonathan, and we remember the close friendship which David and Jonathan shared (cf. 1 Sam. 18-20; 24; 2 Sam. 1). But on the other hand, David has also mentioned the house of <u>Saul</u>, and that draws out other associations. Saul became David's arch enemy, and even at Saul's death his power was still felt, as Abner was able to install Ishbaal as king after Saul at Mahanaim (2 Sam. 2:8-10).

Is David really desiring then to show <u>hesed</u> to Meri-

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[1]For one of the most recent discussions of the problem, see Martin A. Klopfenstein, <u>Die Lüge nach dem Alten Testament</u> (Zürich, 1964), pp. 327-28.

baal, or is he simply being shrewd?[1] Does he want to identify and supervise this descendant of Saul, or does he merely wish to honor his love for Jonathan? If we think that David's words must be taken at face value and not be questioned as to motive, we need only look at the beginning of the next chapter to realize that this need not be the case (2 Sam. 10:1-4). Here too David declares himself eager to show hesed. But the Ammonites believe that David is using the occasion as an opportunity to take hostile actions against their capital![2]

Then too, we note that Saul's memory dominates chapter 9. The term "house of Saul" (בית־שאול) occurs in verses 1, 2 and 3 and Saul is mentioned in verses 7 and 9. Ziba's loyalty to the former king is suggested by his being referred to as the "servant of Saul" (נער שאול -verse 9). In David's conversation with Ziba, Meribaal is referred to by the king as "the son of your lord"[3] (verse 9), again of course signifying Saul. Strikingly, Meribaal is introduced as both בן־שאול and as בן־יהונתן (verse 6, and cf. verse 7), again suggesting the author's wish to lay stress on Saul's abiding presence.

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[1]We reject the theory that 2 Sam. 21:1-14 was originally placed immediately before 2 Sam. 9. See above, p. 41, n. 1.

[2]Rose, op. cit., p. 247 believes that David "undoubtedly intended to impose his suzerainty upon Ammon".

[3]We read לביתאדניך , with Lucian's recension, for MT לבן־אדניך at verse 10.

Finally, David's motivation in desiring to have Meribaal eat at his table is made ambiguous by the emphasis laid on the necessity that he eat "at all times (תמיד) there (verses 7, 10 and 13).[1] And so there is a hint of irony in David's declaration of desire to show hesed. Is he genuinely doing a kindness for Meribaal, or is he rather wishing to keep this possible dynastic rival under surveillance?

The manner in which our narrator presents Ziba and Meribaal in 2 Sam. 9 suggests in subtle ways that he favors Meribaal. While Meribaal bows before David when he first reaches the king (verse 6) and at the conclusion of his interview (verse 8), Ziba does not do this. Note also that our narrator refers to David by that name throughout his conversation with Meribaal, while the more formal title "the king' appears in his conversations with Ziba (verses 2b-4 and 9-11).

If David's motivation in offering Meribaal a place at his table is suspect, Meribaal's reception of the offer is just as ambiguous. When David finishes listing what he intends to do for Meribaal, the latter responds:

> What is your servant that you should look upon a dead dog such as I? (9:8)

Now this could be accepted as proper courtly manner or the

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[1] Cf. however the similar phraseology in 2 Kings 25:29 (Jer. 52:33).

sincere statement of a humble man.[1] But perhaps Meribaal realizes that David's real reason for being magnanimous is to keep track of him, and here he resigns himself to the inevitable.[2]

Later on (16:1-4), Ziba appears with two laden donkeys for David and his troops, and claims that Meribaal is delighted over the turn of events and now expects to rule over Israel in place of David. The king apparently believes Ziba's account as he immediately turns over to him the property of Saul which he gave to Meribaal earlier. But again there is ambiguity here. For one thing, by what means did Meribaal suppose that the usurper Absalom would relinquish the throne to him? Could this crippled man expect that he was physically acceptable as king?

The third and final installment in the story of Ziba and Meribaal follows the victory of David's forces over Absalom. First we hear that Ziba is hurrying down to the Jordan to aid the king's passage across (19:18). A nice

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[1]George Coates, "Self-abasement and Insult Formulas," JBL, LXXXIX (1970), p. 15 lists numerous parallels to this formula in the Lachish and the Amarna letters. Cf. also Irene Lande, Formelhafte Wendungen der Umgangssprache im Alten Testament (Leiden, 1949), pp. 101-2.

[2]David used a similar expression in speaking to Saul (1 Sam. 24:14): "After whom has the king of Israel come out? After a dead dog! After a flea!" David belittles himself here but Saul, we recall, had regarded David as a serious threat and came in search of him with three thousand choice troops (24:2). And Saul even admits that David will be king after him in this episode (24:20). It is possible then that both Meribaal and David intend their words as ironic.

gesture, and very commendable! But notice that Shimei is also rushing to be first to greet the king (19:18-24) and he was hardly loyal to David earlier!

Now Meribaal appears (19:25ff.) and our suspicions that he rather than Ziba is the sincere party are strengthened. Notice the way in which our author suggests Meribaal's loyalty by describing his disheveled appearance:

> He had not dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard nor washed his clothes from the day the king left until the day he returned safely (19:25).

Does this sound like further posturing? Or is it not rather likely that Meribaal has been genuinely disturbed over David's plight?

David asks Meribaal why he did not support him in his flight, and Meribaal replies that he intended to help but that Ziba deceived him and that he, being crippled, was then unable to ride after David. Here the significance of Meribaal's crippled feet (והוא פסח שתי רגליו - 2 Sam. 9:13; cf. 9:3 and 4:4) is finally realized, and Meribaal is shown as sincere. Meribaal puns on his condition in his protestation of loyalty to David:

> For your servant is crippled (פסח). But he slandered (וירגל) your servant before my lord the king (19:27b-28a).

David cannot decide which of the two is telling the truth, and so he divides the property between them. Meribaal, in a final gesture of loyalty to David, generously suggests that all the property be given to Ziba, signifying

his gratitude that David has returned safely (19:31).

Hushai's dialogue with Absalom (2 Sam. 16:15-19) is another place where the theme of loyalty appears. We recall that David dispatched Hushai to neutralize Ahitophel's advice to Absalom (2 Sam. 15:32-37). Hushai enters Jerusalem now and declares:

> Long live the king, long live the king (יחי המלך יחי המלך -16:16).

Now Absalom takes these as words of greeting for himself, and replies by questioning Hushai's loyalty to David in making this statement. Absalom puns on Hushai's courtly title, "companion of David" (רעה דוד -16:16):[1]

> Is this your hesed for your friend (את־רעך)? Why did you not go with your friend (את־רעך)? (16:17)

It is possible that Hushai's words are actually directed to David, the true king, and only incidentally praise Absalom!

Hushai now replies to Absalom's challenge with further ambiguity, and the irony increases:

> Indeed,[2] for he whom the Lord and this people and all the men of Israel have chosen, his will I be, and with him I will remain (16:18).

Again the statement may be taken two ways. Absalom under-

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[1]For more on this terminus technicus, see Herbert Donner, "Der 'Freund des Königs,'" ZAW, LXXIII (1961), pp. 269-77.

[2]The initial לא of verse 18 could be either asseverative, as we have translated, or negative, as Absalom understands it. The second לא should be emended to the masculine singular object, with the Qere.

stands this pledge of loyalty to refer to himself, and he now allows Hushai into his inner council. But does it really speak of Absalom? The key here is the reference to Yahweh as having chosen the king. In no way can Absalom say that he is Yahweh's elect, while David most definitely was chosen of the Lord (cf. especially 1 Sam. 16:1-13 and 2 Sam. 6:21). While Absalom is flattered by the statement, Hushai could be merely pledging his loyalty to the true king, David!

Now Hushai concludes his speech with a further ironic statement:

> Moreover, whom will I serve, if not his son? As I have served your father, so shall I be before you.[1] (16:19)

Depending on our understanding of the phrase כן אהיה לפניך, the entire statement can be taken as a pledge of loyalty to David, and nothing more.[2] If his speech were to unambiguously declare servitude to Absalom, Hushai could easily have substituted "so shall I serve you" (כן אעבד לפניך) for "so shall I be before you" (כן אהיה לפניך) and thereby make his new loyalty very clear. But Hushai wants both to

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[1]The German Luther-Bibel (Stuttgart, 1965) renders the Hebrew correctly: "Wie ich deinem Vater gedient habe, so will ich auch vor dir sein."

[2]"...Hushai's phraseology is such that his statement is not a declaration of defection at all, but rather a definition of the real purpose of his appearing before Absalom. In view of David's commission to Hushai, the latter simply declares that he is now serving 'before David's son' in the same capacity in which he served before David, that is to say, as spy." Rose, op. cit., pp. 116-17.

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gain Absalom's confidence, and yet not in any way to compromise his true loyalty to David. He is able to accomplish these two goals with this careful choice of words!

The ironic ambiguity of Hushai's address to Absalom is matched by that of Jonathan to Adonijah (1 Kings 1:43-48). Here again the individual's loyalty is seen as actually belonging to David. Adonijah and his supporters are celebrating his coronation when a tumult is heard from the city (1:41). Just at that moment Jonathan appears, and Adonijah says (1:42), "Come, for you are a brave man and will bring good news (וטוב תבשר)." Jonathan replies (1:43), "Surely (אבל), for our lord King David has made Solomon king." There is a hint of irony here in the two interpretations possible for the asseverative אבל . Jonathan may disagree with Adonijah's contention that he will bring "good news", and in that case we would translate the word as "No". Or Jonathan may regard what he is saying as indeed "good news", and then we would translate as we have above. It is possible that Jonathan, who earlier was messenger for David (2 Sam. 15:36 and 17:17-21) is still loyal to David, and therefore couches his speech in terms which need not betray that loyalty. Jonathan's speech could be understood as that of one on Adonijah's side, while actually remaining loyal to David.[1]

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[1]This challenges the contention of J Knox, "Jonathan," IDB, II, p. 968 and others that this passage indicates that Jonathan has shifted his allegiance from David to Adonijah.

In the excitement of his news, Jonathan goes on to speak in glowing terms of the rejoicing in the city. He affirms that Solomon sits on his father's throne and closes with a recitation of David's blessing of his son. Does this sound like the speech of one discouraged by the turn of events? Notice also that Jonathan twice refers to David as "our lord, King David" (verses 43 and 47). It is possible that a deliberate play is intended here between the false king Adonijah (אדניהו) and the true king (אדנינו המלך). Only here in the Succession Narrative is David given this title. Through this play on words, our author may be pointing to the distinction between Adonijah, who tries to usurp the throne, and "our lord the king", who designates his proper successor.

Enough evidence has been gathered at this point to demonstrate the importance of irony for the author of the Succession Narrative. Although some of our examples will be debated by other interpreters, many others confirm our identification of the phenomenon as a major literary device. We now turn to consider the theology of the Succession Narrative, and the narrative techniques utilized in its presentation.

CHAPTER V

THEOLOGY AND RHETORIC

1. Introduction

We have devoted the foregoing chapters of this thesis to the rhetorical phenomena of repetition and irony. We have seen that correct knowledge of narrative techniques has led us behind the story we are considering to a deeper understanding of our author's purpose in writing as he did. In this our final chapter we shall discuss the theology of the Succession Narrative, and more specifically the importance of narrative techniques for the presentation of that theology to the listener. As in the preceding chapters, our considerations will focus upon compositional art. But we shall of necessity be working more broadly here than previously, as we must deal with all of those techniques which illuminate the theological viewpoint of our author, and as we now attempt to reach some conclusion as to the origin and the purpose of the Succession Narrative as a whole.[1]

In this connection, there is a basic question with which we must first deal. That is, to what extent is 2 Sam. 7 related to the chapters which follow (2 Sam. 9-20, 1 Kings

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[1]We have reserved for consideration at this time certain instances of repetition in 2 Sam. 7, as they are best dealt with in the context of the theology of the chapter.

1-2)? A brief historical survey of scholarly opinion on this matter will indicate why we should address ourselves to the question.

Leonhard Rost's "Die Ueberlieferung von der Thronnachfolge Davids",[1] published in 1926, is the classic treatment of the scope and purpose of the Succession Narrative. Rost argued that the dynastic theme which is so strikingly present in 1 Kings 1 and 2 could be traced back through 2 Sam. 9-20 to a beginning with Nathan's oracle promising a dynasty to David in 2 Sam. 7.[2] But in his consideration of 2 Sam. 7 itself, Rost argued for three distinct layers of tradition, only the first of which (verses 1-7, 11b, 16, 18-21 and 25-29) could be dated to David's time. Rost reasoned that this earliest stratum concerned a promise made to David alone, and that only at a later time did the oracle extend to David's posterity and even later to all the people.[3]

In the years following Rost's very persuasive presentation, debate shifted to the comparison of 2 Sam. 7 with its prose counterpart in 1 Chr. 17 and its poetic equivalent in Ps. 89. Much of this work followed Rost's

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[1] In Das kleine Credo und andere Studien zum Alten Testament, pp. 119-253. Originally in BWANT, III 6 (1926).

[2] Ibid., pp. 191ff.

[3] Ibid., pp. 159-83. For a recent attempt at source criticism of 2 Sam. 7, arriving at different results from those of Rost, see J. Coppens, "L'union du throne et du temple d'apres l'oracle de Nathan," ETL, XLIV (1968), pp. 489-91.

lead in questioning an early date for 2 Sam. 7. For instance, Mowinckel,[1] Ahlström,[2] and Carlson[3] all contend that 2 Sam. 7 was written after and influenced by Ps. 89. Pfeiffer has the most skeptical position of any; he dates 2 Sam. 7 to the fourth century B. C. and speaks in very disparaging terms of the quality of the prose in the chapter, as over against the poetic original which he posits.[4] McKenzie[5] takes the view that all three biblical versions are recensions of a lost original in poetry, while van den Bussche[6] finds the version in 1 Chr. 17 closer to the hypothetical original than 2 Sam. 7. Finally there have been scholars who have regarded 2 Sam. 7 as late and Deuteronomic to a greater or lesser extent. This position was held by Wellhausen[7] and

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[1]Sigmund Mowinckel, "Natanforjettelsen, II Sam. 7," SEA, XII (1947), pp. 220-29.

[2]G. W. Ahlström, Psalm 89; Eine Liturgie aus der Ritual des leidenden Königs (Diss. Uppsala; Lund, 1959).

[3]Carlson, David, the Chosen King, p. 118.

[4]Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 368-73. He is followed by Caird, op. cit., pp. 865 and 1082. One cannot avoid concluding that Pfeiffer's very negative opinion of the style of 2 Sam. 7 is influenced by his desire to establish the priority of the poetic version.

[5]John McKenzie, "The Dynastic Oracle: II Samuel 7," TS, VIII (1947), pp. 187-218.

[6]H. van den Bussche, "Le texte de la prophétie de Nathan sur la dynastie davidique," ETL, XXIV (1948), pp. 354-94.

[7]Julius Wellhausen, Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments (Berlin, 1899), pp. 237ff. and 254f.

more recently favored apparently by McCarthy.[1] Carlson[2] regards 2 Sam. 7 as largely composed by the Deuteronomic school.

If Rost's analysis introduced a variety of opinions concerning the composition of 2 Sam. 7, it also brought confusion as to the relation of the chapter to the remainder of the Succession Narrative. If only a portion of 2 Sam. 7 can be dated to the period in which the Succession Narrative was written, and if the chapter is regarded as built of several layers of tradition into its present form, then a skepticism is introduced as to the possibility of considering it a legitimate part of the corpus. For instance von Rad, who has the most important discussion to date of the theology of the Succession Narrative, follows Rost's literary analysis of 2 Sam. 7 in detail and has little to say about the theology of the chapter in relation to the chapters following beyond consideration of the promise of a dynasty to David.[3] More recently, Whybray is led by Rost's argument to the conclusion that the real beginning of the Succession Narrative is missing, and omits 2 Sam. 7 from his monograph on wisdom in the corpus.[4]

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[1]Dennis McCarthy, "II Samuel 7 and the Structure of the Deuteronomic History," JBL, LXXXIV (1965), pp. 131-38.

[2]David, the Chosen King, pp. 97ff.

[3]von Rad, Old Testament Theology I, pp. 310ff.

[4]Op. cit., p. 8. Similar skepticism in recent scholarship on the subject is expression by Jackson, op. cit., pp.

The skepticism as to the early date and unity of 2 Sam. 7, together with the reluctance to relate the chapter directly with the chapters following, suggest that a rhetorical analysis is indicated at this time as a possible aid in ascertaining the true state of affairs.

We offer the following as our thesis: Second Sam. 7, with the exception of verses 12b-13a and possibly also verse 1b,[1] is the introduction to the Succession Narrative. The chapter is a unity and is, with the rest of the corpus, to be dated sometime during the reign of Solomon. It is possible that chapter 7 is somewhat earlier than the remainder of the work, and that it existed independently of it for a time.[2] But this chapter definitely functioned as the starting point for the corpus and the latter was written from its perspective. The theology of 2 Sam. 9-20 and 1 Kings 1-2 is the theology set forth in chapter 7, and is properly understood from that vantage point. In the remain-

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183 and 186; Ellis, op. cit., p. 77; Brueggemann, "The Trusted Creature," p. 491, n. 25.

[1]With the exception of verse 13a, the building of a temple for Yahweh is nowhere approved in 2 Sam. 7. It was quite probably added by an apologist for Solomon, who built a temple in spite of the oracle refusing his father's offer to do the same. Verse 12b must be removed along with 13a, for it cannot possibly adjoin directly with verse 13b. Verse 1b is generally regarded as Deuteronomic language. Similarly Noth, "David and Israel in II Samuel VII," in The Laws in Pentateuch and other Studies, trans. D. R Ap-Thomas (Edinburgh, 1966), p. 258, n. 27.

[2]So also Amsler, op. cit., p. 35; Noth, "David and Israel," p. 259; Roland de Vaux, "Jérusalem et les prophètes," RB, LXXIII (1966), p. 483; cf. von Rad, Old Testament Theology I, pp. 311-12.

der of this thesis we shall argue for the validity of this thesis, emphasizing where possible the contribution which rhetorical criticism makes to our proof. Obviously we must first come to some understanding of the nature of 2 Sam. 7; we shall then consider its relation to the rest of the Succession Narrative.[1]

2. Rhetorical Criticism of 2 Sam. 7

The chapter opens with David sitting in his palace. He remarks to Nathan that he dwells in a house of cedar, while Yahweh dwells "in curtains". The brief scene concludes with Nathan's response that the king should do whatever is on his mind, for Yahweh is with him (verses 1-3). That night, Yahweh tells his prophet Nathan to inform David that he has never requested such a dwelling place (verses 4-7). But while he does not desire a temple for himself, Yahweh will establish a dynasty for David; his offspring will sit on his throne for ever (verses 8-16). Nathan conveys the oracle to David (verse 17) and he responds with a prayer of thanksgiving and requests that the promise be fulfilled (verses 18-29).

The chapter as a whole deals with two motifs. Verses 1-7 concern David's proposal to build a temple for

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[1]It would be appropriate to write a full doctoral dissertation on 2 Sam. 7 itself, particularly in terms of its poetic features and tradition history. We have had to limit ourselves to the rhetorical aspects of the chapter.

Yahweh and his refusal of that proposal. The remainder of the chapter, verses 8-29, relates Yahweh's promise of a lasting dynasty to David and his reception of that promise. The oracle of Nathan, the central portion of the chapter, addresses itself to both motifs, first refuting the temple proposal and then promising a lasting dynasty.[1] The two motifs are presented by means of the key word בית and the related word ישב , which together serve to organize the entire chapter. In understanding this basic datum much of the controversy about this chapter is eliminated.

Both key words are introduced to us at the very opening of the chapter; David is said to dwell (ישב) in his palace (בביתו -verse 1). Then the monarch addresses his prophet:

> See now, I am dwelling (ישב) in a house (בבית) of cedar, but the ark of God dwells (ישב) within curtains (2 Sam. 7:2).

The two halves of this statement by David intend a sharp contrast; this fact is brought out by scrutiny of the structure of the verse. The first half of the statement consists of three parts - subject, verb and object - and each of these parts has a matching equivalent in the second half of the statement. The parallel construction of the two parts makes the force of the contrast of the "house of cedar" as over against "within curtains" even more noticeable:

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[1]Ernst Kutsch, "Die Dynastie von Gottes Gnaden," ZTK, LVIII (1961), p. 139.

ראה נא אנכי	יושב	בבית ארזים
וארון האלהים	ישב	בתוך היריעה

In this manner David effectively contrasts his own dwelling (יושב) in a house of cedar with the ark's dwelling (ישב) in a tent.[1] The strength and permanence of the king's cedar residence is set off against the fragile and transitory nature of Yahweh's home. While David does not state so explicitly, the context and the reply of Yahweh which follows indicate that David intends to build Yahweh a cedar temple worthy of comparison with his own lodging.

Nathan responds to David's suggestion in a general way. The king should do whatever he desires, for he is in favor with Yahweh. But that night the prophet receives an oracle from Yahweh. The initial portion of the oracle, encompassing verses 5b-7, concerns temple building. Beginning with verse 8, a new subject, that of a Davidic dynasty, is introduced. The transition to the second subject is skillfully indicated at verse 8 by the opening word ועתה followed by a second formula citandi which parallels, with the slight variations characteristic of the corpus, the formula which introduced the preceding portion of the oracle:

לך ואמרת אל־עבדי אל־דוד כה אמר יהוה (verse 5a)

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[1]Notice that the repeated verb is written plene first and defective second, in accord with Francis Andersen's findings, "Orthography in Repetitive Parallelism," JBL, LXXIX (1970), pp. 343-44. We might also suggest that ראה נא אנכי functions as a filler, so that the length of the first half of the statement matches that of the second half syllabically.

כה־תאמר לעבדי לדוד כה אמר יהוה צבאות (verse 8a)

Yahweh responds to David's offer of a temple by referring to his past history with Israel (verses 5b-7). In all of his relations with his chosen people, until this day, he had never asked for a temple. Why then does David propose to build him a temple, when he has not requested it?[1] The emphasis of Yahweh's response to the temple proposal is placed at the conclusion of the first section of the oracle:

> In all my journeying with the sons of Israel, did I ever demand of one of the judges[2] of Israel whom I established to shepherd my people Israel, "Why have you not built me a temple of cedar?" (2 Sam. 7:7)

The argument which opened (verse 5b) with the pointed question האתה תבנה לי בית לשבתי concludes here (verse 7b) with another rhetorical question: למה לא בניתם לי בית ארזים . In this way, the reply is neatly framed by an inclusio dealing with the motif of building (בנה) a temple (בית). Moreover, that inclusio conveys the force of the argument. Notice also that the temple issue is concluded (verse 7b) with the very words (בית ארזים)[3] with which David had

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[1]For a discussion of the numerous other interpretations offered for this first part of Nathan's oracle, see Josef Schreiner, Sion-Jerusalem, Jahwes Königssitz (Munich, 1963), pp. 80-89.

[2]Reading "judges" with 1 Chr. 17:6. David Noel Freedman has pointed out to me that MT שבטי could represent a byform of שפטי . This is supported by words in the Arad Ostracon in which ב and פ interchange.

[3]For bt arzm in Ugaritic literature, see 51:V:72 and the discussions of Carlson, David, the Chosen King, p. 98 and

initiated his proposal (verse 2a).

The center of the first section of the oracle effectively contrasts the idea of dwelling in a temple (ישב בבית) with Yahweh's journeying with Israel, expressed by the hithpael of הלך ;[1]

> Will you build me a temple (בית) for my dwelling (לשבתי)? For I have not dwelled (ישבתי) in a temple (בבית) from the day I brought the sons of Israel out of Egypt until this very day; I have been journeying (מתהלך) in a tent-habitation. In all my journeying (התהלכתי) with the sons of Israel, did I ever demand of one of the judges of Israel whom I established to shepherd my people Israel, "Why have you not built me a temple (בית) of cedar?" (2 Sam. 7:5b-7)

As de Vaux correctly recognizes[2] it is not the rejection of a house (בית) in favor of a tent or the rejection of a sedentary existence for Israel in favor of a nomadic way of life which is argued here. As a matter of fact, the ark of Yahweh has already inhabited sanctuary buildings, at Obed-Edom, Kiriath-Jearim and especially Shiloh. The oracle does not deliberately ignore these earlier locations; indeed, they are actually admitted in the reference to a "tent-habitation" (באהל ובמשכן -verse 6) which employs the terms used of the sedentary sanctuaries of the Canaanites[3] and

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Artur Weiser, "Die Tempelbaukrise unter David," ZAW, LXXVII (1965), pp. 159ff.

[1]For a discussion of the poetic qualities of these verses, see Jan Dus, "Die altisraelitische amphiktyonische Poesie, " ZAW, LXXV (1963), pp. 47-48.

[2]"Jérusalem et les prophètes," RB, LXXIII (1966), pp. 481-509.

[3]The texts, noted by de Vaux, ibid., p. 487, n. 24

which are specifically linked to Shiloh in Ps. 78:60. But the former sanctuaries are carefully described as only transitory residences for Yahweh (ואהיה מתהלך באהל ובמשכן -verse 6). This suggests that the polemic seeks to confirm Yahweh's absolute freedom, be it to journey (התהלך) or to settle (ישב) in a temple over against David's will for his God. David wishes permanence for himself and hopes that his God will abide with him. Yahweh rejects David's design for him, but nevertheless promises his king the permanence he desires (verses 11ff.). David must not build him a temple, for Yahweh has not requested such a favor of him. But Yahweh will build a dynasty of David's descendants.

In this connection, we note the force in the words האתה תבנה לי בית לשבתי (verse 5b). A few scholars[1] wish to contrast the independent pronoun אתה here with הוא in verse 13, where it is said that David's successor will build a house for Yahweh's name. But it is more probable that the intended antithesis for the emphatic האתה "Will you?" is present in the same verse - לי "for me."[2] A possible translation might then be "Do you, a mere human, dare to suggest

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are 128:III,18-19 and 2 Aqht,V,31-33.

[1]So Carlson, David, the Chosen King, p. 109 and C. L. Labuschagne, "Some remarks on the prayer of David in II Sam. 7," OTWSA, III (1960), p. 32.

[2]So de Vaux, "Jérusalem et les prophètes," p. 485, n. 15; Hartmut Gese, "Der Davidsbund und die Zionserwählung," ZTK, LXI (1964), p. 21; Marcel Simon, "La prophétie de Nathan et le Temple," RHPhR, XXXII (1952), p. 50; Noth, "David and Israel," p. 251.

building a home for me?"[1]

The first half of the oracle dealt with David's intended plan and opened with an address to him - אתה (verse 5b). In the second portion, Yahweh counters with a description of his intention for David; the speech appropriately begins with אנכי (verse 8). Yahweh next recapitulates his great works on behalf of Israel and David:

> I took you from the pasture, from following the flock, to be prince over my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have destroyed all your enemies before you. I have made you a great name like the name of the great ones on the earth.[2] I have assigned a place for my people Israel; I have planted them and they dwell there. They shall never again be disturbed; no more shall wicked men oppress them, as formerly. From the day which I appointed judges over my people Israel, I have given you rest from all your enemies (2 Sam. 7:8-11a).

The great deeds recounted here are to be seen against the background of the temple episode preceding. Having refused

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[1]And cf. Isa. 66:1-2 and Acts 7:45-50.

[2]We read the verbs of verses 9-11a as preterite with waw copulative, with Oswald Loretz, "The Perfectum Copulativum in 2 Sm 7:9-11," CBQ, XXIII (1961), pp. 294-96; Titkin, op. cit., p. 48; Rost, Thronnachfolge, p. 170f.; E. S. Mulder, "The Prophecy of Nathan in II Sam. 7," OTWSA, III (1960), p. 39; Kutsch, op. cit., p. 141. Cf also Hertzberg, op. cit., p. 285. The usual decision to read these verbs in the future tense is a problem, as the perfects beginning with ועשתי (verse 9b) have to depend then upon an imperfect (ואעשה -verse 9a) which itself is consecutive rather than indicative. The context suggests that Yahweh is reciting to David the great deeds which he has already accomplished for him (verses 8-10) and for Israel (verses 10-11a) and this accords with David's secure position in verses 1 and 21. For other examples of a weqatal construction, see Loretz, op. cit.; Kutsch, op. cit., p. 141, n. 2. And cf. GK, paragraphs 112pp-uu. The versions reflect the confusion here; cf. Carlson, David, the Chosen King, p. 107.

David's generous if somewhat patronizing and self-seeking offer to build a temple for him, Yahweh counters that all that David has accomplished has been because he has sustained him.[1] The words "I have been with you" (ואהיה עמך -verse 9) echo the earlier words of Nathan (כי יהוה עמך -verse 3) and suggest that the king who sits proudly in his palace owes all to his God. It is Yahweh who chose David, took him from his lowly position and elevated him to a נגיד , Yahweh who destroyed those who opposed David, and Yahweh who gave his people land (מקום) and security. Throughout the period of the judges, Yahweh had subdued all of Israel's foes; he did not need or request the security of a temple for himself during that troubled time! But while Yahweh does not desire a permanent location, he has accomplished that for Israel; he has planted (נטע) his people in the land.

With verse 11b, Yahweh turns to speak of the future:

> And Yahweh declares to you that Yahweh will make you a dynasty. When your days are ended and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from you,[2] and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. When he commits wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men.[3] But my love will not depart from

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[1]Yahweh's position is dramatically opposite that of Baal, whose status is threatened because he does not have a temple like the other gods. Cf. ANET, pp. 129ff.

[2]Omitting verses 12b-13a as a secondary addition.

[3]Note the poetic parallelism of בשבט אנשים and ובנגעי בני אדם .

him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from your path. Your house and kingdom shall be established for ever before me;[1] your throne shall be established for ever. (2 Sam. 7:11b-16)

The promise of a dynasty in these verses is framed by an inclusio based on the key word בית . The section opens:

והגיד לך יהוה כי בית יעשה לך יהוה (verse 11b)

In the closing verse, other terms for dynasty, that is "kingdom" and "throne" appear alongside בית in bringing the promise to a climactic conclusion:

ונאמן ביתך וממלכתך עד עולם לפני[1] (verse 16)
כסאך יהיה נכון עד עולם

Beyond the marvelous things which Yahweh has already done for David, he will do more. While David is not to build a temple (בית) for Yahweh, Yahweh will establish an enduring dynasty (בית) of David's descendants.[2] The ruling monarch of David's line will share a covenant relationship with Yahweh (verse 14, and cf. further below), and Yahweh will never break off that alliance in the manner in which he abandoned Saul.

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[1]Reading לפני for MT לפניך, with LXX. The כ appeared by dittography from the following word כסא .

[2]The argument of Carlson, David, the Chosen King, p. 109 and Noth, "David and Israel," p. 251 that verse 11b does not relate smoothly to verse 5b because the former uses the verb עשה and the latter בנה is unconvincing. We have seen in Chapter II that variations in vocabulary are characteristic of the corpus. Nor can we agree with Georg Fohrer, Introduction to the Old Testament, trans. David Green (Nashville, 1965), p. 222 that the second half of Nathan's oracle was secondarily linked to the first half by means of the בית motif.

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The final portion of the chapter, verses 18-29, consists of David's response in prayer to the oracle which Nathan had conveyed to him. Throughout the prayer there are motifs and key words which link this portion with the rest of the chapter. Both of our key words, יׁשב and בית , occur prominently at the opening of the prayer. Now David sits before Yahweh (וישב לפני יהוה -verse 18), obviously indicating a position of reverence before the ark. The supposed difficulty with the use of יׁשב for a position of worship[1] is explained by considering the opening of the chapter. There the secure monarch, sitting (יׁשב -verse 1) on his throne, had proposed to build a temple for his God. But Yahweh rejected his offer in no uncertain terms, and now the monarch has been reduced to a position of utter humility, now he sits (יׁשב) before the "throne" of his God, the very ark which he had proposed to enshrine in walls of cedar![2]

David opens with two further references to the key word בית , and in so doing links his prayer of thanksgiving closely to the promise just given him through Nathan's oracle. First he recalls Yahweh's past deeds on his behalf (cf. verses 8-9):

> Who am I and what is my family (ביתי) that you have brought me this far? (2 Sam. 7:18)

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[1]Cf. Smith, Samuel, p. 302.

[2]Labuschagne, op. cit., p. 29, n. 13 points out that יׁשב is also used in Judg. 20:26 to refer to the people gathering at the ark.

Then he speaks also of the future promise (cf. verses 11b-16):

> But even this is a trifle in your eyes, O Lord God, and you have spoken of the house (בית) of your servant for a great time to come (2 Sam. 7:19a).

Expressions of time are important here and throughout 2 Sam. 7. Yahweh argued against the building of a temple by reference to past events, speaking of the beginning of time "from the day (למיום) I brought Israel out of Egypt" (verse 6a) until the day of his covenant with David (ועד היום הזה -verse 6a). His protection of Israel extended from the time (ולמן־היום -verse 11a) he established judges over Israel. These facts assure the stability of the dynasty for all future time (עד־עולם -verses 13b and 16). Similarly, David focuses past events upon the present moment (עד־הלם -verse 18b) and then surveys the future, speaking of "a great time to come" (למרחוק -verse 18a),[1] picking up the words כון and עד־עולם from the oracle and applying them to Israel's future with Yahweh (verse 24), to Yahweh's name (verse 26) and to David's house (verses 25, 26 and twice in verse 29).

Having spoken words of thanksgiving for Yahweh's beneficence on his behalf, David turns in verses 23-24 to express with equal eloquence Yahweh's gifts for the people

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[1] למרחוק of verse 18 is synonymous with עד־עולם in verses 13b and 16, with Schulz, Die Bücher Samuel, p. 84 and Amsler, op. cit., p. 38.

of Israel.[1] Here too David is consciously responding to the contents of the oracle preceding (cf. verses 10-11a).

The first portion of David's prayer, that of thanksgiving, concludes with verse 24. Having expressed proper gratitude, the king turns in verses 25-27 to request the fulfillment of the oracle; the new beginning is again indicated by the transition word ועתה .[2] With these last verses the climax of the prayer is reached. David links his future with that of the people, and the surety of his success with that of Israel. Yahweh's promise is expressed once more, now in the first person, and provides here the antithesis to the question posed at the opening of the chapter:[3]

האתה תבנה לי בית לשבתי (verse 5b)

בית אבנה לך (verse 27b)

The prayer concludes in verses 28-29 with David's wish for Yahweh's blessing on his descendants.

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[1]In verse 23 we read אֶחָד with LXX for MT הלך , (cf. 1 Chr. 17:21) for MT הלכו , להם for MT לכם , and conclude with לגרש מפני עמו גוים ואלהים, altering MT לארצך to לגרש with LXX and 1 Chr. 17:21, changing MT עמך to עמו , and omitting אשר פדית לך ממצרים . So essentially de Vaux, Les livres de Samuel, p. 174, n. c; Smith, Samuel, p. 304; and Driver, Notes on...Samuel, pp. 277-78 following the explanation of the textual confusion offered by Geiger and cited by Driver. Beyond the textual problems we see no particular difficulty with verses 22-23, and no reason to regard these as a Deuteronomic addition, as does Rost, Thronnachfolge, pp. 164-65.

[2]The same division of the prayer is offered by Gressmann, op. cit., p. 39 and M. Tsevat, "The House of David in Nathan's Prophecy," Bib., XLVI (1965), p. 355.

[3]Amsler, op. cit., p. 36.

3. Form Criticism of 2 Sam. 7

We have argued for the unity of 2 Sam. 7 on the basis of motifs and key words. Herrmann[1] has argued for its unity on the basis of its supposed parallels with the Egyptian literary genre, the Königsnovelle. According to Herrmann, the most elemental form of the genre is as follows: 1) The pharaoh conceives of a plan which he communicates to his officers in attendance. 2) They respond with praise of the king and his great wisdom. 3) The plan is carried out.[2] Herrmann then goes on to discuss other less typical elements of the literary form, and here attempts to establish that the genre is present in 2 Sam. 7: 1) Frequently the plan proposed by the pharaoh concerns the building or repair of the god's temple. As we have seen above, this is also the intention behind David's statement in verse 2. We note, however, that it is only a brief and indirect statement of David which suggests his intention to build a temple, while in the Egyptian parallels the plan is specified in considerable detail. 2) as the account opens, the pharaoh is specifically located; he is sitting in his palace. The opening phrase of 2 Sam. 7 is a fine parallel to this genre

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[1]S. Herrmann, "Die Königsnovelle in Aegypten und in Israel," Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Karl-Marx-Universität (Leipzig), III (1953-54), pp. 51-62 and see further in his bibliography, p. 51. Cf. also von Rad, "The Royal Ritual in Judah," in The Problem of the Hexateuch, pp. 222-31.

[2]Herrmann, op. cit., p. 51.

element. 3) While typically the pharaoh converses with a group of court dignitaries, at times he presents his plan to a single individual. So too, David makes his suggestion to one person, Nathan. 4) The pharaoh's court usually approves his plan outright. We have no quarrel with this putative parallel either, although again the abbreviated and quite general response of Nathan (verse 3) is quite subdued by comparison with the extravagant eulogizing of the monarch at this point in the Egyptian examples. 5) At times the court may object to the plan as too bold, but this is simply a device to emphasize the absolute power of the pharaoh, as he always proceeds with his plan in the end. At this point in his discussion,[1] Herrmann becomes somewhat vague, probably because 2 Sam. 7 does not offer a clear parallel. He concedes that the refusal of the plan in the Hebrew example is that of the god Yahweh (verses 5b-7) and not that of the court represented by Nathan. But he nevertheless suggests that, despite this difference, the Egyptian model may have influenced the composition of 2 Sam. 7 at this point. 6) The pharaoh may enlarge on his intended plan of temple construction by speaking of his intimate relationship with his god. In this connection, he will describe in particular his extraordinary youth and predestination to rule. He refers to himself as the full son of the god. In the pharaoh's divine origin the two basic themes of the genre Königs-

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[1] Ibid., p. 59.

novelle, that of temple building and that of royal theology, are linked and traced back to their mythical origins.[1] Herrmann asserts that the royal theology present in Nathan's oracle from verse 8 on parallels the Egyptian prototype. But again there is an important distinction to be made. In Egypt the pharaoh recounts his own past history and divine status, while in 2 Sam. 7 Yahweh relates it to David through an oracle. Moreover, where in Egypt the pharaoh decides in favor of a god, and chooses him for his own, in Israel the opposite is true. Yahweh has elected David to be his representative (verses 8ff.)![2] And as we shall see below, the elements from 2 Sam. 7:8 on are more correctly seen in relation to the genre of covenant than with the Egyptian court ceremony. 7) Following the accomplishment of the pharaoh's plan, the account may conclude with an offering or a prayer to the god. The suggested parallel to this element is David's prayer in verses 18ff.

Herrmann's thesis has several serious flaws. 1) The genre Königsnovelle is not adequately attested in Hebrew literature. The only examples Herrmann offers are 2 Sam. 7 and 1 Kings 3:4-15. These two units diverge greatly from each other and from the proposed Egyptian prototype. At times Herrmann will resort to a comparison of the two Hebrew

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[1] Ibid., p. 58.

[2] Cf. Amsler, op. cit., pp. 36-37.

examples when, we must conclude, he has no direct Egyptian parallel to support his case![1] 2) There is no single example in the Egyptian literature cited by Herrmann which parallels more than half of the elements asserted for 2 Sam. 7.[2] The exact genre is elusive, and Herrmann has to range widely through Egyptian literature to establish the secondary elements of the model which he then compares with 2 Sam. 7. Here his methodology becomes quite loose.

While the genre Königsnovelle in its totality is doubtful for 2 Sam. 7, we can agree that certain genre elements are present at the opening of the chapter. We have no quarrel with the presence of the genre through verse 3.[3] But then it is broken, and strikingly so at the very point where Yahweh intervenes. Until verse 4 our story is quite effectively illuminated by comparison with the Egyptian court ceremony. But from there on, comparison only brings out the profound differences imposed by Yahwistic theology.

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[1]E.g. Herrmann, op. cit., pp. 59-60.

[2]Probably the best example offered is that of the Great Abydos inscription of Ramses II. Cf. James Breasted, Ancient Records of Egypt III (Chicago, 1906), pp. 102-17.

[3]A Mesopotamian parallel to this portion of 2 Sam. 7, discussed by Arvid Kapelrud, "Temple Building, a Task for Gods and Kings," Orientalia, N. S. XXXII (1963), pp. 56-62, is at least as convincing. Gudea has a dream at midnight but its meaning is unclear to him. He goes to the sanctuary to have it interpreted, and is informed that Ningirsu has commanded him to build a temple. The details of construction are then given in further visions.

The text is available in George Barton, The Royal Inscriptions of Sumer and Akkad (New Haven, 1929), pp. 204-55. See also Kutsch, op. cit., pp. 147-8.

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Over against the pharaoh, who is never refused by his god, and especially so when he is building him a temple, Yahweh rejects David's plan and asserts his absolute sovereignty over his human representative.[1]

If Herrmann has shown us some intriguing parallels between the opening of 2 Sam. 7 and the Egyptian Königsnovelle, Calderone[2] has argued quite persuasively for the form critical parallels between verses 8-16 of 2 Sam. 7 and the Hittite suzerainty treaties: 1) The suzerainty treaty typically opens with an historical prologue, in which past great deeds performed by the suzerain on behalf of his vassal are recited.[3] In this context, the Great King will speak in particular of his protecting the lesser subject from all his enemies.[4] Like his counterpart in the Hittite treaties, David is described in 2 Sam. 7 as of humble circum-

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[1]Cf. also the hesitation of de Vaux, "Jérusalem et les prophètes," p. 485 and the strong criticism of Kutsch, op. cit., pp. 151ff.

[2]Philip Calderone, Dynastic Oracle and Suzerainty Treaty: 2 Samuel 7, 8-16 (Manila, 1966). See also the independent conclusions of de Vaux, "Le roi d'Israël, vassal de Yahve," in Bible et Orient (Paris, 1967), pp. 287-301.

[3]Calderone, op. cit., pp. 17-18 and 44.

[4]Note also with de Vaux, "Le roi d'Israël," pp. 289-91 that the term "servant", which appears throughout 2 Sam. 7, is a term used of the vassal in the Hittite treaties. See also the passages in the Bible which speak of the Davidic covenant (Ps. 89:4; 2 Sam. 23:5; Jer. 33:20-22; Ps. 132:12). The term is used frequently as a protocol of humiliation in the Amarna letters. The expression "my servant" followed by the individual's name appears to be an honorific title when used here and of Moses in Josh. 1:2 and 7.

stances before being lifted up, "enthroned" by the overlord, and protected from all his foes.[1] Calderone extends this recital of past benefits only as far as verse 9b;[2] we have argued above[3] that the past tense, and with it this opening section of the treaty form, should extend from verse 8 to verse 11b. 2) While the point is not pressed particularly, Calderone suggests[4] that the promise of a "great name" for David (verse 9b) is not incongruous with the similar promises made to the vassal in the suzerainty treaties. 3) There is even evidence in the Hittite treaties for the deliberate inclusion of the people along with their ruler in a treaty with the suzerain.[5] A fine example of this is the treaty between Shuppiluliuma and Huqqanas in which the Hayasa people receive equal attention along with their own ruler. This treaty element corresponds to verse 10 of Nathan's oracle. 4) Even more striking is the presence in both the oracle and the suzerainty treaties of promises made by the Great King to establish and maintain the dynasty of the vassal

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[1] On the etymology and significance of the word נגיד, see de Vaux, "Le roi d'Israël," pp. 288-9 and his bibliography cited there; Calderone, op. cit., pp. 58-60 and his bibliography, and Gese, op. cit., p. 12, n. 7.

[2] Op. cit., p. 43, n. 8.

[3] Page 182, n. 2.

[4] Op. cit., pp. 44-46.

[5] Ibid., pp. 21-23 and 46-50. De vaux, "Le roi d'Israël," pp. 293-94 also notes this.

for future generations.[1] The suzerain guarantees that the lesser party will not only be protected, but that he will have a successor to his throne "for ever". Again the parallels with 2 Sam. 7 (verses 11b-13) are obvious.[2] 5) Further, the Great King accepts the vassal as his adopted son, and in that context demands obedience from him at the same time that he promises to install him as king.[3] The four elements of sonship, throne, obedience and rule correspond remarkably with verses 13-16 of the oracle of Nathan. At this point Calderone offers for comparison the opening of the Hittite treaty with Ulmi-Tessub of Datassa:[4]

> As for you, Ulmi-Tessub, I have affirmed your possession of Datassa. After you your son and grandson will hold it, and no one shall take it away from them. (But) if any of your line sins (against Hatti), the king of Hatti will have him tried, and if he is condemned he will be sent to the king of Hatti where, if he merits it, he will be executed. Let no one take away Ulmi-Tessub's inheritance and country from his line to give to another line. Let it all remain the possession of Ulmi-Tessub and his line.

Particularly noteworthy here are the unconditional promise of continuation of the dynasty (cf. 2 Sam. 7:15-16) and the brief mention of obligations which should be fulfilled (2 Sam.

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[1] Op. cit., pp. 18-19 and 50-53. Cf. pp. 29-40 on the ancient Near Eastern setting in general.

[2] But note Calderone's caveat, ibid., pp. 39-40: "In all ancient oriental literature there appears to be no instance of a god promising enduring kingship to a whole dynastic line."

[3] Ibid., pp. 53-57.

[4] Ibid., p. 56; also de Vaux, "Le roi d'Israël," p. 293.

7:14).

If the form of 2 Sam. 7:8-16 follows that of the Hittite suzerainty treaties, then its Israelite counterpart, the covenant, immediately suggests itself.[1] And indeed, while the term ברית does not occur in chapter 7, it does in other Biblical passages which allude to Nathan's oracle (specifically Ps. 89:4-5 and 21-38; Ps. 132:11-12; 2 Sam. 23:5; Jer. 33:20-22). Further support in 2 Sam. 7 itself for such a view is the appearance of the covenant term חסד in verse 15[2] while the most convincing evidence is the expression אני אהיה־לו לאב והוא יהיה־לי לבן in verse 14. Although this formula has a counterpart in the suzerainty treaties,[3] it is more specifically part of the covenant binding Yahweh and his people Israel, in which Yahweh becomes father and Israel son (Exod. 4:22; Deut. 14:1; 32:5-6; Jer. 3:4; Hos. 11:1).[4]

If there is an indication in 2 Sam. 7 of a covenant between Yahweh and David's house, it is also true that the

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[1]On the form of the Israelite covenant, see George Mendenhall, Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East (Pittsburgh, 1955); Muilenburg, "The Form and Structure of the Covenantal Formulations," and Klaus Baltzer, Das Bundesformular (Neukirchen Kreis Moers, 1960).

[2]Cf. André Caquot, "La prophétie de Nathan et ses échos lyriques," SVT, IX (1962), p. 218.

[3]Calderone, op. cit., pp. 53-54.

[4]So McKenzie, Myths and Realities: Studies in Biblical Theology (Milwaukee, 1963), pp. 205-6. See also Calderone, op. cit., p. 54.

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chapter in its entirety abounds with allusions and direct references to the prior covenant, that of the Israelites at Sinai.

1) The most obvious statement in this connection is David's use of covenant terminology in verse 24: ותכונן לך את־עמך ישראל לך לעם עד־עולם ואתה יהוה היית להם לאלהים. One is immediately reminded of the same formulation in covenantal contexts: למען הקים־אתך היום לו לעם והוא יהיה־לך לאלהים (Deut. 29:12; cf. Exod. 3:14 and 6:7; Deut. 7:6 and 26:18; Hos. 1:9).

2) Throughout the chapter, there are numerous references to the Israelites as being Yahweh's particular people. Yahweh speaks of them as "my people Israel" (verses 7, 8, 10 and 11) and David correspondingly as "your people Israel" (verses 23 and 24). Here again the terminology is that of the covenant (Exod. 3:7; 5:1).

3) Yahweh is spoken of as "Yahweh of Hosts" (verses 8, 26 and 27), a title which is linked with the tribal league and the ark.[1]

4) The ark itself, specifically mentioned in verse 2, is the obvious setting for the events of chapter 7. David has just brought the ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6); now he proposes to build a temple to house the sacred palladium.

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[1]So Noth, "David and Israel," pp. 255ff.; Gese, op. cit., pp. 25-6; Amsler, op. cit., p. 37; de Vaux, "Jérusalem et les prophètes," p. 488; Eissfeldt, "Jahwe Zebaot," in Kleine Schriften III (Tübingen, 1966), pp. 103-23.

At verse 18, David certainly goes before the ark to respond in prayer to the oracle he has received.[1]

5) While David is said to be king in verse 1, in verse 8 his importance as the sacral leader of the tribal league, the נגיד , is stressed.[2]

6) Particular attention is given to Yahweh's aiding Israel in the periods of the exodus (verses 6 and 23) and the judges (verses 7 and 11), culminating in their settlement in the promised land (verse 10).

7) Absent from the "treaty" with David in 2 Sam. 7 are the lengthy stipulations of the Hittite form, which bind the vassal's behavior to the wishes of his overlord. However, in verses 14b-16 it is declared that when the Davidic king sins,[3] Yahweh will punish him. Calderone asserts that the legal demands of the Sinaitic covenant should be regarded as binding on the king:

> It would probably be more accurate to affirm that this covenant with the king is implicitly conditioned by the fundamental Sinai covenant with its ritual and moral demands....Thus, the apparently unconditional formula might better be interpreted in a broader context that would necessarily include as a firm basis the uncom-

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[1]Noth, "David and Israel," p. 259 suggests that the sanctuary of the ark is the setting and the point of preservation of 2 Sam. 7. For a hypothetical cultic festival comprising both 2 Sam. 6 and 7, see Kraus, Die Königsherrschaft Gottes im Alten Testament (Tübingen, 1951).

[2]See above, p. 193, n. 1.

[3]The preposition in בהעותו (verse 14b) is taken as temporal "when" rather than conditional "if" with Calderone, op. cit., p. 62 and many others.

promising imperatives of the Sinai Covenant.[1]

Comparison with Ps. 89 supports this argument, for there the terminology of 2 Sam. 7:14b is specifically linked with the Sinaitic covenant demands:[2]

> If his children forsake my law (תורתי)
> and do not walk according to my ordinances,
> if they violate my statutes
> and do not keep my commandments
> then I will punish their transgression with the rod
> (ופקדתי בשבט פשעם)
> and their iniquity with scourges (ובנגעים עונם);
> but I will not remove from him my steadfast love (חסדי),
> or be false to my faithfulness.
> I will not violate my covenant,
> or alter the word that went forth from my lips
> (Ps. 89:30-34 Heb. 31-35).

The genius of 2 Sam. 7 is that the dynastic promise to David has been inexorably fused with the Sinaitic covenant between Israel and Yahweh. Nothing of that earlier covenant is replaced or made void by the new covenant with David's house; the latter adds a new dimension to the former, but is primarily presented as simply a continuation of the Sinaitic bond.[3] The people of Israel are already in a treaty

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[1] Op. cit., p. 63. Cf. also Carlson, David, the Chosen King, p. 126.

[2] The Chronicler omits 2 Sam. 7:14b altogether, apparently because he idealized David and presented him as faultless. Ps. 132:12 and 1 Kings 2:4 make the dynastic promise contingent upon keeping the Law. On the importance of the king for covenant renewal, see 2 Kings 11:17 and 23:3 and the discussions of de Vaux, "Le roi d'Israël," pp. 293-4 and Noth, "The Laws in the Pentateuch: Their Assumptions and Meaning," in The Laws in the Pentateuch and other Studies, trans. D. R. Ap-Thomas (Edinburgh, 1966), pp. 41ff.

[3] For more on the relation between the Davidic and the Sinaitic covenants, see A. H. J. Gunneweg, "Sinaibund und Davidsbund," VT, X (1960), pp. 335-41; J. R. Porter,

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relationship with Yahweh;[1] that alliance is reaffirmed and extended here. David is singled out by Yahweh to be a נגיד, but that is only that he might lead and preserve "my people Israel" (cf. verse 8).[2] Yahweh has planted (נטע -verse 10; cf. Exod. 15:17) his people in the promised land;[3] now he will establish (כון -verses 12, 16, etc.) David's house.

That David understands this historical grounding of the promise is revealed in the way in which he applies terms reserved for his dynasty to the people of Israel. This crossing over of terminology has the effect of welding together stylistically and theologically the future of the people of Israel and the future of the house of David. Thus the words כון and עד־עולם (verses 13b and 16) are now applied to the people already associated in covenant with Yahweh (verse 24).[4] In verse 26, the climactic point of the prayer, the security of David's house is established by linking this with the name of the God of the tribal league:

Moses and Monarchy: A Study in the Biblical Tradition of Moses (Oxford, 1963), pp. 11-13; Noth, "God, King and Nation in the Old Testament," in The Laws in the Pentateuch, pp. 145-178. All of these refute the contrasts stressed by Rost, "Sinaibund und Davidsbund," TLZ, LXXII (1947), cols. 129-134.

[1]Verses 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 23, 24, 26, and 27.

[2]Noth, "David and Israel," pp. 253-4.

[3]We cannot agree with Gese, op. cit., that מקום (verse 10) refers specifically to Zion. See Noth's refutation, "David and Israel," p. 253, n. 10.

[4]See above, pp. 185-7.

> May your name be great for ever (עד־עולם), and let men say, "The Lord of Hosts is God over Israel," and so shall the house of David be established before you.

If the people of Israel and their God endure "for ever" (verses 24 and 26), then so will David's house![1]

In the midst of the changes brought about by the introduction of a monarchy in Israel, her past is dramatically reaffirmed. Israel's political situation has been greatly altered, but the importance of the tribal league covenant remains.[2] There is no contradiction between the Sinaitic and the Davidic covenants:

> ...les deux alliances ont le même objet, elles font d'Israël le peuple vassal de Yahwé et le passage de l'une à l'autre tient au changement de constitution politique: l'alliance du Sinaï avait été conclue avec les tribus fédérées, l'alliance davidique est conclue avec le roi qui est le régent du peuple de Yahvé et qui devient son vassal.[3]

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[1]It is obvious then that the people of Israel were part of the original composition of 2 Sam. 7, contrary to Rost, Thronnachfolge, p. 161 who attempted to date verses 22-24 to a later redaction. See also Amsler, op. cit., p. 37; Noth, "David and Israel," pp. 252-53; Gese, op. cit., pp. 25-26; Hertzberg, op. cit., p. 288; Calderone, op. cit., pp. 65-66.

[2]Cf. de Vaux, "Jérusalem et les prophètes," p. 488 and Amsler, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

[3]De Vaux, "Le roi d'Israël," p. 294. On the intriguing relations between the covenant with Abraham in Gen. 15 and that with David in 2 Sam. 7, see Ronald Clements, Abraham and David: Genesis 15 and its Meaning for Israelite Tradition (Naperville, 1967), pp. 52ff.; A. Caquot, "L'alliance avec Abram (Genèse 15)," Semitica, XII (1962), pp. 51-66; D. N. Freedman, "Divine Commitment and Human Obligation," Inter., XVIII (1964), pp. 419-31. Even the same terms appear in both passages; cf. Carlson, David, the Chosen King, p. 122. On the relation of the J source with the Succession Narrative, see Brueggemann, "David and his Theologian," Ellis, The Yahwist, pp. 190ff.; Blenkinsopp,

4. The Relation of the Story of the Succession to 2 Sam. 7

There are three major motifs with which 2 Sam. 7 is concerned: 1) Yahweh's lordship over history and over his chosen leader David is asserted. This motif is implicit throughout the chapter, but is forcefully put in Yahweh's rejection of a permanent sanctuary in verses 1-7. 2) A covenant is established between Yahweh and the house of David. 3) David is promised that his descendants will reign on his throne for ever. Having stated our conviction that 2 Sam. 7 is the foundation for the remainder of the Succession Narrative, we must now demonstrate the importance of these three motifs in the composition of 2 Sam. 9-20 and 1 Kings 1-2.

First, however, a comment about methodology is in order. In the chapters following 2 Sam. 7, our author only rarely makes direct references to Yahweh or to his participation in the events taking place (specifically at 11:27, 12:1, 12:15, 12:24 and 17:14).[1] Because of the paucity of these theological comments by the narrator, the theological intent of the chapters has seemed obscure or even non-

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"Theme and Motif in the Succession History (2 Sam. xi 2ff) and the Yahwist corpus," pp. 44-57. Clements, Prophecy and Covenant (Naperville, 1965), pp. 58-66 presents evidence of the importance of Sinaitic covenant theology in pre-exilic Judah.

[1]Von Rad, "The Beginnings of Historical Writing in Ancient Israel," in The Problem of the Hexateuch, p. 198 followed Rost, Thronnachfolge, p. 235 and confined himself to 2 Sam. 11:27, 12:24 and 17:14.

existent to some scholars.[1] But we have found and will demonstrate below that a careful examination of the theological statements which the characters themselves make will enable us to discern the deliberate inclusion of all of the motifs we have noted in 2 Sam. 7. Von Rad was unwilling to regard the speeches in the Succession Narrative as of any significance in determining the author's intent:

> We must go on to investigate at what points in this work the author speaks of God. We are not thinking now of the numerous more or less rhetorical appeals to God which are put in the mouths of the protagonists in dramatic situations, for it is by no means certain that we could discover from these the real convictions of the author.[2]

Von Rad's judgement is open to question at this point. In this narrative which so superbly portrays action, character and motivation through the medium of the speeches of characters, it is very possible that theological meaning could also be conveyed in the same manner rather than through evaluative statements of the author.[3] The logic of such a compositional technique is obvious:

> ...if it is the sacred author who composes the speeches or discourses, it can be presumed, more often than not,

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[1]So for example Adolphe Lods, Histoire de la littérature hébraïque et juive (Paris, 1950), p. 165 and John Priest, personal communication, who regards all direct references to Yahweh as added by the Deuteronomists.

[2]Von Rad, "Historical Writing," p. 198.

[3]This has been demonstrated by Hals, op. cit. for the book of Ruth in comparison with both the Succession Narrative and the Joseph story. We are indebted to Hals' stimulating monograph for the development of our methodology for the chapter.

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> that the speeches or discourses express his theological interpretation, or at the very least, the bent of his mind and the direction of his thought.[1]

In fact, we will find many examples which support this viewpoint.

a. Yahweh's Lordship over History

The story of David and Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11:1-12:31) especially presents the motif of Yahweh's control of the events of history. As we have already seen,[2] the entire second half of this chiastically organized narrative is dominated by the active intervention of Yahweh, despite the fact that there are only three specific references to him (i. e. 11:27, 12:1 and 12:24). There can be no doubt that Yahweh has directed events to punish David; indeed, the fate of his first child borne by Bathsheba is in retrospect doomed from the moment that Yahweh passes adverse judgement on David (11:27). But Yahweh's involvement in the events of history, and his punishment of David for his crimes, do not end with this story. Although no further direct references to Yahweh occur until 2 Sam. 17:14, the catastrophes which befall Amnon and then Absalom can be seen to be inter-

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[1]Ellis, op. cit., p. 115. See also his discussion of the technique by the J writer in the pages following. Even von Rad, Old Testament Theology I, p. 52 admits the validity of the technique for the book of Ruth: "the latent theological thread in it has to be gathered, as the case arises, from the words of the people involved."

[2]Cf. above, pp. 63-73.

woven with and traceable to David's initial crimes.[1] Von Rad correctly noted this character of the Succession Narrative:

> The solemn declaration of a prophet has brought into prominence the motive of retribution which pervades unseen the whole work. The jus talionis, so often secretly at work in history, is here prophetically revealed as the personal activity of the Lord of History against the adulterer. The whole history of David can, indeed, be in some sense understood as the history of the punishment for this one transgression.[2]

But if Yahweh intervenes in hidden ways to punish the sinner, he is also working to fulfill his promise to David. If the Succession Narrative is a history of David's punishment for his crimes, it is also a history of the achievement of Yahweh's intentions despite the aspirations of men. Our narrator gives us one brief yet tremendously significant notice to indicate this understanding of history. Near the close of the story of David's transgression, Bathsheba bears him a second son; at this point the narrator comments "And Yahweh loved him" (12:24). Solomon will not be mentioned again until the very end of David's life (1 Kings 1-2), but his future importance is suggested with these words. As the elected one of Yahweh, Solomon's eventual success is a foregone conclusion. Again von Rad's comment is succinct:

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[1]See above, pp. 142-46 on the stylistic relation of 2 Sam. 13:1ff. to the story of David and Bathsheba.

[2]"Historical Writing," p. 196. Carlson, David, the Chosen King, pp. 131ff. contends that the organizing principle for 2 Sam. 9-24 was the theme "David under the Curse."

> Yet here is a note of the quite irrational love of God for this child, and at the end of the long story when Solomon is left in command of the field after untold complications, the reader will recall this sentence and understand that it is not human merit and virtue which have made the throne secure, but a paradoxical act of election on the part of God.[1]

Much later in the Succession Narrative our author indicates in subtle ways through the words and actions of his characters that it is Yahweh who is responsible for the defeat of Absalom's revolt. Our first hint at Yahweh's participation in the events occurs in the description of David toiling up the Mount of Olives, in desperate flight from his son. As he nears the summit, the king is informed that Ahitophel, whose counsel is as highly regarded as an oracle from God (16:23), is in league with Absalom.[2] David responds, "May Yahweh turn back the counsel of Ahitophel" (15:31), and says this, significantly, "at the place where prayer is made to God" (15:32). Immediately following, Hushai meets David, and he will be the very person by whom Ahitophel's proposal is countered. The juxtaposition of Hushai's appearance with David's prayer is not fortuitous. This is our author's subtle way of indicating Yahweh's providential caring for David and his answering of the king's prayers:

> This was the turning-point in the rebellion, and the change in the situation was the work of God himself,

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[1]"Historical Writing," p. 199.

[2]Von Rad comments at this point, "Historical Writing," p. 200: "Now God alone can be of assistance!"

> who had heard the prayer of the King in his profound humiliation.[1]

When the debate between the two counselors finally takes place (17:1ff.), Ahitophel's "good" counsel is rejected, for in the words of the narrator, "Yahweh had ordained to defeat the good counsel of Ahitophel, that Yahweh might bring evil upon Absalom" (17:14). The thin thread of Israel's salvation history is preserved intact through Hushai's rash words and Absalom's foolish acceptance of them[2] and Yahweh is shown as effectively in control of the processes of history.

As the story of David and his sons draws to a close, our author speaks his theological conviction through one opposed to Solomon, namely Adonijah:

> You know that the kingdom was mine, and that all Israel expected me to reign; but the kingdom has turned about and become my brother's, for it became his from Yahweh (כי מיהוה היתה לו - 1 Kings 2:15).

With these words the whole span of the history of David's sons is encompassed under Yahweh's control. He gave the throne to Solomon, and by implication withheld it from Amnon, Absalom and now Adonijah.

By means of infrequent yet crucial references to Yahweh, both by himself and through his characters, our author leads us through a series of inappropriate dynastic claimants until finally the one favored by Yahweh succeeds

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[1] Ibid., p. 200. On the rhetorical technique of "answered prayers," see Hals, op. cit., pp. 7-8 and passim.

[2] See above, pp. 130-35.

through a court plot. By his shaping of the story, our author witnesses in the most profound way possible to Yahweh's direction of history to his own goals, through the actions of men and despite the wills of men:

> Jahweh's control takes in all that happens. It does not let itself be seen intermittently in holy miracles; it is as good as hidden from the natural eye; but it continuously permeates all departments of life, public and private, religious and secular alike. The special field where this control of history operates is the human heart, whose impulses and resolves Jahweh in sovereign fashion makes subservient to his plan for history.[1]

Although rarely mentioned, Yahweh must be seen as the chief actor in the Succession Narrative:

> the narrative is dominated by a single motif from beginning to end, the activity of the Spirit and the realization of the divine intention in history.[2]

b. The Covenant with David

Covenant terminology is not prominent in the Succession Narrative after 2 Sam. 7.[3] But the intimacy of the alliance of Yahweh with David is stressed frequently in speeches of individuals to David in which Yahweh is referred to as specifically David's God and able to save David from all his enemies.[4] So, for instance, the wise woman of Tekoa concludes

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[1]Von Rad, Old Testament Theology I, p. 316.

[2]Muilenburg, The Way of Israel (New York, 1961), p. 25.

[3]But cf. 2 Sam. 16:18 where it is said that Yahweh chose (בחר) David.

[4]The expression יהוה אלהיך is typical covenantal terminology. Cf. Noth, "The Laws in the Pentateuch," pp. 20f.

her plea with the words ויהוה אלהיך יהי עמך (14:17), which parallel 2 Sam. 7:3 (כי יהוה עמך) and 7:9 (ואהיה עמך). The motif that Yahweh has rescued David from all his enemies (2 Sam. 7:9)[1] reappears in a poignant context in the scene in which David learns of the death of his son Absalom. Both Ahimaaz and the Cushite declare that Yahweh has rescued David from all who oppose him, obviously including in this category the king's own son:

> I will carry the news to the king that Yahweh has rescued him from his enemies (מיד איביו -18:19).
>
> Blessed be Yahweh your God (יהוה אלהיך) who has delivered up the men who raised their hand against my lord the king (18:28).
>
> Let my lord the king rejoice, for Yahweh has delivered you today from the hand of all who rise up against you (18:31).

The motif is most dramatically present at the conclusion of the story. At the end of his life, David confirms here that Yahweh has seen him through all his troubles:

> By the life of Yahweh, who has ransomed my life from all distress (1 Kings 1:29).

Then, when David declares his intention to have Solomon anointed, Benaiah responds,

> Amen! May Yahweh, the God of my lord the king (ויהוה אלהי אדני המלך) confirm it (1 Kings 1:36).

Benaiah goes on to express the hope that Yahweh's alliance with David will continue now with his son:

> As Yahweh has been with my lord the king (כאשר היה יהוה עם־אדני המלך) so may he be with Solomon (כן יהיה[1] עם־שלמה) and may he make his throne greater

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[1]Reading the Qere יהיה.

(ויגדל את כסאו) than the throne of my lord the king David (1:37).

We have indicated above[1] that the stipulations of the Sinaitic covenant are binding on the Davidic monarch, and that these stipulations are alluded to in 2 Sam. 7:14b:

> When he commits sins, I will punish him with the rod of men and the stripes of the sons of men

The verse following (2 Sam. 7:15) contrasts the discipline under which David's descendants are to be accountable with that for Saul, from whom the Spirit of Yahweh departed:

> But my hesed will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you.

When we come to 2 Sam. 12 we find intriguing parallels to these verses of the oracle. Again Saul appears (verses 7 and 8), although that may be just coincidence. Nathan accuses David of scorning the "word of Yahweh", a possible reference to his violation of two of the Ten Commandments.[2] Both of David's crimes, that of adultery and that of murder (12:9) are punishable by death (Deut. 22:22 and Exod. 21:12). At this point the listener naturally questions whether the covenant between Yahweh and his chosen monarch can endure. But then Yahweh passes over the expected sentence of death. In this we can see that Yahweh's relations with David are to be qualitatively different from those with Saul. Yahweh does not turn away from David, despite the severity of his

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[1] Pp. 197-98.

[2] Cf. Carlson, David, the Chosen King, p. 160.

crimes.[1] But there is more. David's death would annihilate the promise made to him; the death of his son threatens to do the same. Both David's sin and its punishment endanger the continuation of the dynasty, but finally with the birth of a second son (12:24) the promise is possible again![2] Our author's very willingness to expose David in such a negative way in this story must be understood as a technique to emphasize the profundity of Yahweh's covenant with the monarch.[3]

If Yahweh does not abrogate his covenant with David, he in turn remains loyal and trusting of his Suzerain. David's obedience and trust is particularly striking in the context of the suffering he undergoes throughout the Succession Narrative.[4] When David's son becomes ill, the king

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[1]"...where Saul and his dynasty had been rejected because of his sins, David and his dynasty had been preserved despite his sins." Ellis, op. cit., p. 81.

[2]"It is important that David's sin, which was sufficient to jeopardize his life and his kingdom, should find its conclusion precisely within the framework of the theme of the succession to the throne of David, in punishment and in forgiveness". Hertzberg, op. cit., p. 316.

[3]Cf. the judgement of Ellis, op. cit., p. 80: "the author takes considerable pains to recount the 'iniquities' of David". Caquot, "La prophétie de Nathan," pp. 216-7 and after him Calderone, op. cit., p. 64 think that the author of 2 Sam. 7 (14b) was aware of existing sins of David, and that these were then described in the chapters following. Similarly McKenzie, "The Dynastic Oracle," p. 206.

[4]The theme of David's obedience is also present in the story of his rise to power. David is portrayed as "a man of piety who seeks counsel from the Lord and is submissive to his will (cf. 1 Sam. 16:7; 17:37, 45-47; 23:2, 4, 10-12; 24:6, 18-20; 26:9-11; 30:6-8." Ellis, op. cit., p. 75. See

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reacts with a strenuous program of fasting and prayer, in the hope that Yahweh might at the last moment spare his child.[1] His actions are explained by him after the child dies:

> For I thought that Yahweh might be gracious to me and the child live (2 Sam. 12:20).

A second text of similar import is 2 Sam. 15:24-26. As David flees from Jerusalem, his followers come to him bearing the ark which customarily went with the Israelite leaders as signifying Yahweh's presence with them. But David rejects the ark:

> Carry the ark back to the city. If I find favor in the eyes of Yahweh, he will bring me back and let me see it and his habitation; if he says, "I have no pleasure in you," let him do as he pleases (2 Sam. 15:25-26).

The point is not that David regards the ark as insignificant; we have seen that David will pray before the ark (2 Sam. 7:18 and 12:20). Rather, his speech stresses that he places his trust in Yahweh, and recognizes that he alone will enable him to survive. David is thereby able to dispense with the symbol of Yahweh's presence, even as he has learned to live without a temple for his God.

A third text is the scene in which David is cursed (2 Sam. 16:5-14). Abishai requests that he be allowed to kill Shimei for offending the anointed of Yahweh. Again David rejects the customary response, and in so doing

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[1] On this passage, see Brueggemann, "The Trusted Creature," pp. 489-90.

reveals his utter trust in Yahweh's covenant with him. The importance of the moment is emphasized in that Shimei has challenged the legitimacy of David's right to the throne (16:8). Once more the dynastic promise is jeopardized. David answers that Shimei should be allowed to curse him, for Yahweh has commanded him to do so, and hopefully he will reward the king for the humiliation he is suffering. In this David recognizes Yahweh's complete control of the events of history, even those events which momentarily appear to contradict Yahweh's announced intention to sustain his chosen king. David regards the curse itself as ultimately inconsequential, and commits his future to Yahweh, thereby robbing Shimei's words of their power:

> If he is cursing because Yahweh has commanded him, "Curse David", who then shall say "Why have you done so?"...Let him alone and allow him to curse, for Yahweh has commanded him. Perhaps Yahweh will look upon my affliction[1] and repay me with good for his cursing this day (2 Sam. 16: 10-12).

c. The Dynastic Succession

The importance of the theme of the succession to the throne in 2 Sam. 9-20, 1 Kings 1-2 was incontestably demonstrated by Rost.[2] He argued that virtually every episode in these chapters could be related to the question posed in 1 Kings 1: "Who will succeed to the throne of David?" In

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[1]Reading בְּעֵינָי with the versions for MT בַּעֲוֹנִי .

[2]Thronnachfolge.

the course of the narrative we learn how it came about that Solomon was born and then how three of his half-brothers, Amnon, Absalom and Adonijah, all potential or declared claimants to the throne, were eliminated from consideration, so that finally the son favered by Yahweh assumed his father's realm. Other less central episodes in the narrative serve to highlight the central theme; particularly important in this regard are the actions of remaining members of the house of Saul. The several appearances of Meribaal and his servant Ziba serve more than entertainment for our author; they are also intended to remind the listener of the now feeble yet still potential threat to David's house from Saul's followers. The Sheba episode serves the same purpose; as a Benjaminite he is of the same tribe as Saul, and his actions threaten not only the succession to David's throne but also the dynasty itself.[1]

Immediately following the dynastic oracle, our author introduces dramatic tension with the story of David and Bathsheba.[2] Has the future promise been negated by David's crimes? Several details of the scene between David and Nathan indicate a conscious allusion to their earlier meeting in 2 Sam. 7. When David is confronted with the tale of the

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[1]Ellis, op. cit., p. 79.

[2]2 Sam. 9 is a deliberately light interlude between passages of high drama. For the same technique in Shakespearean tragedy, see A. C. Bradley, Shakespearean Tragedy (Cleveland, 1955), p. 43.

rich man, he sanctimoniously declares that a man who would do such a thing is a בן־מות (2 Sam. 12:5). The term is best translated "deserving of death", but David's choice of words is almost too appropriate in the context of the events which ensue.[1] Nathan then asserts directly what the king has hinted at obliquely:

> The son (הבן)born to you will surely die (מות ימות verse 14).

The words בן and מות will find fulfillment in the doom of four of David's sons![2]

David had regarded Uriah's death lightly, and informed Joab that he should not be troubled about what has happened, for in David's words, "the sword devours at random" (כי־כזה וכזה תאכל החרב -11:25). But this perspective on history is to be confounded. The sword destroys very selectively in the remainder of the story! David's casual words about the sword recoil upon him as his house is cursed with the same instrument of death:[3]

> And now the sword (חרב) shall not depart from your house for ever (מביתך עד־עולם -12:10).

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[1]Cf. A. Phillips, "The Interpretation of 2 Samuel xii 5-6," VT, XVI (1966), pp. 243-45.

[2]Ellis, op. cit., pp. 136ff. speaks of the "obstacle story" as a literary technique of the J source author: "Its purpose is to arouse suspense and sustain interest by recounting episodes which threaten or retard the fulfillment of what the reader either suspects or hopes or knows to be the ending of the story." The same statement applies equally well to the composition of the Succession Narrative.

[3]On the sword as curse, see Brueggemann, "David and his Theologian," p. 161 and the bibliography cited there.

The words of judgement here are an absolute contrast to Nathan's earlier address:

> Your house (ביתך) and your kingdom shall be made sure before me[1] for ever (עד־עולם -7:16a).

The threat to the promise is even more ominous in that retribution will operate within the very house of David:[2]

> Behold, I am raising up evil from your house (מביתך -12:11).

Surely, the listener reasons, Nathan's second oracle has obliterated the significance of the first![3] And so it would seem. As the story proceeds, the prophecy of the sword is accomplished, as Amnon, Absalom and finally Adonijah, all designated בן־מות , die violent deaths at the hands of members of David's household.

David appears to consciously recollect the promise to him when he responds to Shimei's cursing:

> Behold my son, who came forth from my loins (אשר יצא ממעי) seeks my life, and why not also this Benjaminite? (2 Sam. 16:11).

The exact terminology (אשר יצא ממעי) appears elsewhere with this meaning only in Gen. 15:4, a text which we have

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[1]Reading לפני with LXX for MT לפניך.

[2]On the concept of retribution in the Succession Narrative, see von Rad, "Historical Writing," pp. 195-96 and Old Testament Theology I, p. 314.

[3]Here the true tension in the Succession Narrative is to be found. Rost, Thronnachfolge, pp. 212-14 and follow-him von Rad, "Historical Writing," pp. 177-78 stressed the importance of the episode with Michal in 2 Sam. 6:16, 20ff. With Amsler, op. cit., p. 32 we regard that episode as more closely related with the preceding traditions regarding David's rise and Saul's downfall.

also suggested relates to the Davidic covenant[1] and in 2 Sam. 7:12:

> When you lie with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who come forth from your loins (אשר יצא ממעיך)

It is at the close of the Succession Narrative, in the first and second chapters of 1 Kings, that the most obvious references to 2 Sam. 7 are made. We have already spoken[2] of the theme "Who shall sit on the throne of David after him?" which is posed as a question in 1 Kings 1:20 and 1:27, answered by oath in 1 Kings 1:13, 17, 24 and 30, and then echoed still further following the decision to crown Solomon in 1 Kings 1:35, 46, 48 and 2:12 and 24. Here we note simply that this theme is obviously taken from 2 Sam. 7, and that it utilizes the words כסא , מלך , מלוכה and ישב familiar to us from there. The conclusion of the narrative balances off the beginning; in the opening David is established on his throne in covenant with Yahweh, while in the latter his son assumes the same position.

Another allusion in the last two chapters to 2 Sam. 7 concerns David's approaching death. There Yahweh had promised that when David dies (כי ימלאו ימיך ושכבת את אבתיך -7:12), Yahweh will establish one of his offspring on the throne. The opening words of 1 Kings speak directly of David's nearness to death והמלך דוד זקן בא בימים -verse

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[1]See page 200, n. 3.

[2]See pages 113-15.

1. See also verse 15). That is hinted at again in the words of Bathsheba:

> When my lord the king lies with his fathers (והיה כשכב אדני־המלך עם־אבתיו), I and my son will be considered offenders (1 Kings 1:21).

Again the choice of words is deliberate. Bathsheba's pessimism regarding the future for herself and Solomon is offered as the potential negation of Yahweh's promise to David. Yahweh must act now to preserve that promise! Only at the very end of the story is the hoped for outcome realized:

> And David lay with his fathers (וישכב דוד עם־אבתיו) ...and Solomon sat on the throne of David his father, and his kingdom was firmly established (ושלמה ישב על־כסא דוד אביו ותכן מלכתו מאד -1 Kings 2:10a and 12; see also 2:24, 45 and 46).

Repeatedly in these final two chapters of the Succession Narrative, our author places words in the mouths of his characters as a way of expressing his conviction that Solomon was divinely chosen to succeed his father. David declares that it was Yahweh who brought Solomon to the throne:

> Blessed be Yahweh, God of Israel, who gave this day one to sit on my throne (1:48).

Even Adonijah, who is opposed to Solomon, speaks words which legitimize his brother's claim:

> You know that the kingdom was for me and that all Israel expected me to reign, but the kingdom has turned aside and become my brother's, for it became his from Yahweh (1 Kings 2:15).

Climactically, Solomon makes three speeches to each of the three individuals he then executes as potential threats to

his rule, and in each of these he makes conscious reference to the promise to David's house and declares Yahweh's approval of himself. The terminology is exactly that of 2 Sam. 7:13b and 16, including its emphasis on dynasty and throne rather than individual ruler:

ועתה חי־יהוה אשר הכינני וישיבני על־כסא דוד אבי ואשר עשה־לי בית כאשר דבר (1 Kings 2:24)

ולדוד ולזרעו ולביתו ולכסאו יהיה שלום עד־עולם מעם יהוה (1 Kings 2:33)

והמלך שלמה ברוך וכסא דוד יהיה נכון לפני יהוה עד־עולם (1 Kings 2:45)

Our analysis of the rhetoric of 2 Sam. 9-20 and 1 Kings 1-2, and particularly the speeches of characters, demonstrates our author's constant allusion to Yahweh's promise to the king as he describes the history of David's reign. The guarantee of a dynasty is the dominant theme throughout the chapters, and builds to a dramatic finale in the concluding two chapters of the corpus. Despite the very subtle style of our narrator, it could be argued that we have presented sufficient evidence now to conclude that 2 Sam. 9-20 and 1 Kings 1-2 were deliberately written from the perspective of Yahweh's oracle in 2 Sam. 7. The important motifs from there serve to define the events of David's life, and reappear at the significant moments in the history of the period.

CONCLUSION

In closing our study of the Succession Narrative, it would be appropriate to recall where we have been and what we have seen. Our presupposition for this thesis was that a careful scrutiny of modes of prose composition and a precise description of those modes would enable us to do a more thorough exegesis of the corpus than would be possible without such an analysis. Whether or not our methodology has enabled us to deepen our understanding of the Succession Narrative is for the reader to decide. However, on the basis of the evidence we have been able to gather, we may now conclude that our author did indeed utilize rhetorical principles in his composition of the story of David's reign.

One obvious question raised by this conclusion concerns how the Hebrew author came by these skills. Their sophisticated nature suggests that there may have been conscious training in rhetorical techniques. Certainly techniques of composition were passed on from older to younger storytellers. But perhaps there was even a more formal place of instruction, similar to the schools elsewhere in the Near East as far back as the Sumerians.[1] Until we have more concrete evidence, however, the presence of such schools in early Israel must remain conjectural.

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[1]See Ridderbos, op. cit., pp. 51-52 on the possibility of training in the skills of rhetoric in early Israel.

We have seen that the Succession Narrative is a multifaceted composition, with historical, ironic, and even humorous aspects. If we were to specify its major thrust, however, we would have to state that it is theological. Throughout Chapter V, we have seen that the Succession Narrative cannot be regarded as a secular document. Although its theology is subtle and even difficult at times to identify, scrutiny of the composition of the corpus as a whole reveals strikingly that it is throughout theological in intention. The very sophistication of the manner in which the story deals with God's participation in human events witnesses to Israel's profound faith in a God who directs the vicissitudes of history to his own goals. In this manner the Succession Narrative, like the rest of the Bible, was written to the glory of God.

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